

# Harry Potter and the Black Aurors

## Chapter 1

Hermione woke early, she felt worse than she had the previous month.

"Today would have been Harry's seventeenth birthday." She said to herself.

She rose and dressed, and proceeded to walk slowly to the kitchen for breakfast. Harry had been dead now for two months, Cindy was still missing, and Ron, Draco and Dumbledore were no closer to finding her today, than they had been the day they started. Hermione would receive daily owls from Ron, but even though he made them sound hopeful, she knew it was false hope.

Hermione's parents were well aware of the date, they, like Hermione, were dreading it. Mr. and Mrs. Granger were in the kitchen eating, when Hermione entered. Her father decided to engage Hermione in conversation.

"Who are all those classmates of yours, who keep popping in and out of the house?" He asked pleasantly.

"Dark Aurors," Hermione answered, not really realizing what she had said, and regretting it the moment she said it.

"Dark Aurors, they sound dangerous. What exactly are Dark Aurors?" Her mother asked sounding concerned.

Hermione glared at her mother, she had not wanted to explain the DA or the Department to her overprotective parents. She had managed to dance around the topic for the last month.

"If you really must know, Dark Aurors are what they call the members of the Department of Dark Magic Enforcement. They are the ones who fight, and keep the wizarding community safe from the Death Eaters." Hermione said angrier with herself than her parents.

“Death Eaters, aren’t they that Voldemort guy’s followers?” Her father asked, knowing quite well the answer.

“Yes.” Hermione answered shortly.

“Don’t you think it’s dangerous to have them here, won’t that attract those Death Eaters?” Her father asked, now sounding very concerned.

“No more than me being here.” Hermione said vaguely.

“What’s that supposed to mean?” Her mother asked.

Hermione thought for a moment. She had debated all summer whether or not to tell her parents.

“Because, I am their General,” Hermione said determined to sound commanding.

“You’re their what?” Her father asked disbelievingly.

“General.” Hermione repeated.

“You lead a Ministry Department of law enforcement?” Her mother asked.

“No, I lead the most highly funded, highly trained department within the Ministry of Magic.” Hermione clarified angrily.

“But you’re sixteen.” Her father said.

“Yes daddy, I am. I am also the senior officer under the Commander and Chief of the Department of Dark Magic Enforcement, those known as the Dark Aurors. And I spend my days, allocating resources and manpower to keep the Death Eaters at bay. But since my parents won’t let me leave the house, I can’t even go to my office. Hell, I’ve never even seen it.” Hermione explained angrily, and stormed out of the room.

“Do you think she’s serious?” Mr. Granger asked his wife.

"We always knew she was special. Yes, I think she's serious." Her mother answered.

When Mr. Granger entered Hermione's room, she was sitting at her desk, determined not to cry.

"Hermione, can we talk?" Her father asked.

"What?" Hermione said, turning to face him.

"Your mother and I have been talking, first, I want to apologize for the way we've been treating you, you're not a child, and we shouldn't be treating you that way. Second, I wanted to let you know we've decided to let you out. You're a General; you should at least be seen in your own office." He said.

Hermione leaped from her chair, and hugged her father.

"But no missions just supervise, agreed?" Her father added.

"Agreed," Hermione said smiling.

"Well then, I think you need to dress for work." Mr. Granger said, as he left the room.

Hermione began dressing quickly in her DA uniform. As the General, she had solid gold decorations all over the silken robes. When she looked in the mirror, she smiled.

She ran downstairs to thank her mother. When she entered the kitchen, her mother looked at her, and began to cry.

"My baby's all grown up." She wailed, hugging Hermione.

"Mum, please, I'm a General." Hermione said smiling.

"Is that your uniform?" Her father asked.

"Yup," she said.

"Are those real gold?" He asked, motioning to the gold stars and gold piping of the robe.

“Solid gold,” she clarified.

“That uniform alone is worth a fortune.” He said astounded.

“Yeah well, you should see what they pay me.” Hermione added smiling.

“How much,” Mrs. Granger asked her curiosity now peaked.

“Four hundred Galleons per week,” Hermione said proudly.

“Is that a lot?” Her mother asked, but it was Mr. Granger who answered.

“Oh yeah, that’s almost fifteen hundred pounds.” Mr. Granger answered.

“Really, they pay you that much?” Mrs. Granger asked Hermione.

“More than they pay healers as a matter of fact.” Hermione said.

Her mother hugged her again. “I’m so proud of you.” Mrs. Granger said.

“I’ve got to go; I’ll probably be home late. Bye.” Hermione said apparating away.

Mr. and Mrs. Granger looked at each other.

“She can do that?” He asked his wife.

“Apparently,” she answered.

Hermione apparated to the Ministry of Magic, when she arrived she saw all the hustle and bustle she hadn’t seen the last time she was there, when she accompanied Harry and the others to help Sirius.

She saw a guard at the end of the large lobby. The guard was enthralled by some article in Witch Weekly. She walked up to him for directions.

“Excuse me, where is the Department of Dark Magic Enforcement?” Hermione asked pleasantly.

“Do you have an appointment?” The guard asked without looking up.

“I don’t need one.” Hermione said impatiently.

“Everyone going to that department needs an appointment.” The guard said, still not looking up.

“I don’t.” Hermione said shortly.

The guard looked up, ready to admonish Hermione, but stopped when he noticed the uniform.

“Oh, I’m so sorry General, right this way.” He said, standing so quickly, he knocked his tea all over the desk.

He led her down a long hallway, to a private lift at the north end of the building.

“Just take the lift up to seven.” He said smiling.

“Thank you.” Hermione said, not entirely appreciative.

Hermione entered the lift and found there was only one button to press, this was a private lift; she rode it to the seventh floor. She was stunned that no person, but several paper airplanes entered the lift. The planes, that were interoffice memorandums, would ride the lift to the prescribed floor, and fly away silently.

When Hermione arrived at the seventh floor, she saw a long hallway that matched the one on the lobby level. There were only two doors, one on each side of the hall. Hermione did not need a sign to find the office, two house elves, dressed in DA uniforms, guarded the door on the left. She knew immediately it was the Department’s office.

She walked purposefully up to the elves, who noticed her immediately.

“General ma’am, welcome.” The elf wearing a sergeant’s insignia greeted her.

“And you are, sergeant?” Hermione asked regally.

“Master at Arms, Vorn,” he answered.

“Well Master at Arms, it’s a pleasure.” Hermione said warmly.

“The pleasure is mine, General ma’am. Is there anything we can get for you?” He asked, showing the true colors of a house elf.

“No thank you, just going to work.” Hermione answered.

The sergeant bowed, and the door opened magically.

Hermione entered the office she was stunned by the sheer vastness of the office. It was as long as the hallway, and just as wide. On the far left wall were two office doors, and on the right were six. Directly in front of her were windows that stretched from one end to the other, showing various points in Hogsmeade, Diagon Ally, and the Ministry itself. Scattered orderly throughout the main space were cubicles. Hermione quickly did the math; there were one hundred and twenty cubicles.

The receptionist, a witch Hermione had never seen, looked up from the Daily Prophet.

“General!” She said, jumping to her feet.

The entire office, elves and wizards alike, jumped to attention when they heard the receptionist. Hermione surveyed them all.

“As you were,” she commanded. They all sat back down.

Hermione walked to the left side of the office, where she assumed her office would be. There was one secretary for the two offices. One office door was labeled; “General Hermione Granger” the other was labeled; “Commander and Chief Ronald Weasley”. Hermione smiled.

“Good morning General.” The secretary said.

“And you are?” Hermione asked.

“Dorothy.” The witch answered.

“Pleased to meet you, Dorothy,” Hermione said pleasantly, shaking her hand.

“The pleasure is mine, General.” She answered.

“Anything I need to know?” Hermione asked.

“There have been quite a few people to come through here looking for you over the last month, but no one today.” She answered.

“Thank you, I’ll be in my office.” Hermione said, opening her office door.

“Wow.” She said to herself, as she went inside.

The office was much larger than she expected. It measured ten meters, by ten meters. The desk was old and intricately carved, showing witches and wizards fighting. Her chair was almost thrown like in appearance with carved wood, and leather padding. The office windows changed views from various famous places, including Stonehenge, Buckingham Palace, and the New York skyline. Hermione couldn’t have been more pleased.

She sat down, and realized, she didn’t know what to do. This was her first actual day on the job. She resolved to read the various reports from the Dark Aurors in the field. As she was reading, she realized that the Death Eaters were striking at various times and places, with no pattern whatsoever. This made her nervous.

“They’re testing us.” She thought to herself.

“Why? Why would they risk so many Death Eaters, just to test our strengths and weaknesses?” She wondered.

Hermione was pulled from her thoughts when a voice sounded in the office.

“General, a Ms. Tonks is here to see you, again.” Dorothy said sounding like Tonks had been there many times before.

“Send her in.” Hermione said excitedly.

Tonks entered, her hair a deep pink, and her smile warm and friendly.

"Tonks," Hermione exclaimed, hugging her friend.

"Hermione," Tonks replied, hugging her back.

"So good to see you," Hermione said, motioning to a chair for Tonks to sit on.

"Damn Hermione, you're even harder to meet with than the Minister." Tonks said honestly.

"Well, you know, been busy." Hermione said evasively, not wanting to let on that her parents would not allow her to leave the house.

"So, what can I do for you?" Hermione asked, changing the subject.

"Well Hermione, I have a favor to ask." Tonks started. "I wanted to know if you could, I mean if it were possible to." Tonks stalled.

"Oh just spit it out." Hermione said impatiently.

"I want a job." Tonks blurted out.

"Don't you have one?" Hermione asked confused.

"Yeah, but I want to be a Dark Auror. Do you know how coveted these jobs are? Besides, you guys pay more." Tonks said honestly.

"You want to join us? And what do you mean coveted?" Hermione asked.

"Every Auror, every law enforcement wizard, hell, every child, wants to be a Dark Auror. They have a reputation of being the best. The regular Aurors have an apprehension ratio of one Death Eater for every six Aurors per week. Dark Aurors have an apprehension ratio of four Death Eaters for every Dark Auror every week. You guys are famous." Tonks said breathlessly.

"Really, we're famous?" Hermione asked disbelievingly.



“Children are starting to wear junior Dark Auror robes; Madam Milkin’s is selling them. Trust me Hermione, you guys are famous.” Tonks said.

“Wow. Well as far as a job, of course, whatever you want.” Hermione said.

“Really, when can I start?” Tonks asked excitedly.

“Today, do you have a problem starting at the bottom?” Hermione asked.

“No, of course not,” Tonks said, still excited.

“Good, because I’m giving you a field commission to major.” Hermione said smiling.

“You’re kidding?” Tonks asked disbelievingly.

“Nope, we need experience at the top Tonks, and I think you’ll be perfect. All I ask is that you get with Colonel Longbottom about learning some advanced apparition, and unforgivable curse blocking.” Hermione explained.

“Hermione, you can’t block unforgivable curses.” Tonks said matter-of-factly.

“No Tonks, YOU can’t block unforgivable curses, we can.” Hermione said smiling.

“You guys can block the unforgivable curses?” Tonks asked astounded.

“Harry has taught us quite a bit, trust me.” Hermione said, regretting she brought up Harry’s name.

Tonks started to cry, Hermione, who was still only hanging by a thread, started crying as well.

“I can’t believe he’s gone.” Tonks said hoarsely.

“Me neither.” Hermione agreed crying.

“Can I ask you something personal Hermione?” Tonks asked apprehensively.

“Sure.” Hermione answered.

“What did Harry leave you?” She asked.

“What do you mean?” Hermione asked back.

“I mean, Harry, I heard was quite wealthy, and since you and Ron were his daughter’s godparents, I just assumed he left everything to you guys.” Tonks clarified.

“He didn’t leave us anything.” Hermione said deep in thought.

“I can’t believe that. Whom else? No one has heard from Gringotts?” Tonks asked.

“Not that I’m aware of,” Hermione answered.

“Then where’s his money?” Tonks asked not actually expecting an answer.

Hermione’s eyes grew wide. Tonks looked at her like she was crazy.

“He’s alive.” Hermione said quietly.

“What did you say?” Tonks ask.

“He’s alive.” Hermione said louder.

“I don’t know.” Tonks started to say.

“Look at the facts, one, Gringotts hasn’t informed anyone of their inheritance. Two, Harry was very protective and grounded, he would have prepared for a worst case scenario the very day he brought Cindy home, and three, Cindy is only a six year old girl and not even The Albus Dumbledore can find her.” Hermione paused.

“And,” Tonks pressed.

“And four, Voldemort hasn’t made an appearance; he is not back up to full strength. I don’t think he suspects Harry’s alive, but if he was at full strength, he would have challenged the “famous” Dark Aurors by now.” Hermione said, deep in thought.

“Do you really think so?” Tonks asked.

“Yeah, I do. Harry’s alive; I know it. Tonks, I have a job for you.” Hermione said quickly.

“Yes ma’am.” Tonks said, standing to attention.

“Get Colonel Longbottom, and meet me in the Three Broomsticks at eight o’clock tonight.” Hermione commanded.

“Why the Three Broomsticks,” Tonks asked confused.

“Ginny owns the place.” Hermione answered absentmindedly.

“Excuse me?” Tonks asked.

“Oh, that’s right; you didn’t know Harry gave her the Three Broomsticks as a birthday present.” Hermione explained.

“I’m out of touch.” Tonks declared.

“Go; get yourself some proper clothes, clothes befitting a Major in the Department of Dark Magic Enforcement.” Hermione commanded.

“Yes ma’am.” Tonks answered, and left the office.

Hermione walked over to the plotting board in the middle of her office. It showed the location of every member of the Department. There was even a small dot with the name Major Tonks, located at the point marked Headquarters.

She stared at the board. “Where are you Harry Potter?” She asked the board. The board did not answer.

Hermione arrived at the Three Broomsticks, after a short visit home. Her parents were thrilled to hear that she had not, and was not planning on going on any missions.

The pub was quite empty; the seasonal guests would not be arriving until after school started again in September. Hermione walked up to Madam Rosemerta, and greeted her pleasantly.

“General Granger, it’s an honor to see you again.” Rosemerta greeted her back.

“I’m going to need your back room, Colonel Longbottom, and Major Tonks will be here shortly.” Hermione explained.

“Of course, straight back through that door,” Rosemerta directed her.

Hermione went into the back room, and sat down. Ten minutes later, Neville and Tonks entered.

“Hermione, I hear you were in the office today.” Neville said, hugging Hermione.

“Yeah, I finally got to come in.” Hermione answered.

The newcomers sat down, and Rosemerta brought in three butterbeers. Hermione wasted no time, as soon as Rosemerta left, she began talking.

“Neville, I think Harry’s alive.” She began.

“Really,” Neville asked, sitting up straight.

“Yeah, Tonks asked a question earlier, that made me suspect as much.” Hermione explained.

“What did you ask?” Neville asked Tonks.

“I asked what Harry left her and Ron.” Tonks answered.

“And,” Neville asked, turning to Hermione.

“And, he didn’t leave us anything. Do you think Harry’s the type of person to name us godparents to his child, and not prepare for the worst?” Hermione asked Neville.

Neville thought for a moment. "No. Actually, he probably named you and Ron beneficiaries before you even agreed to become Cindy's godparents." Neville said.

"Exactly, Gringotts hasn't sent us notices of any inheritance, and in case you didn't know, Gringotts uses a very powerful spell to know when their clients die." Hermione explained further.

"OH, so if they never informed you, than he can't be dead." Neville said, finally understanding.

"Exactly," Hermione exclaimed.

"What do you need us to do?" Tonks asked.

"I want you two to find him." Hermione said calmly.

"Excuse me." Neville said.

"I want you to find him. I'm thinking, knowing Harry like I do, that he prepared for Voldemort before the battle. I think he knew Voldemort would be there." Hermione began.

"Why would you think that?" Neville asked.

"You know Harry, you know what he's capable of, he can apparate in and out of places no one else can, and he wields wandless magic easier than the rest of us wield our wands, he knows elemental magic, and, he's an animagus. He turned around and watched the killing curse hit him right in the chest; he didn't do anything. He just stood there. And then, Cindy, just happened to have a port key that took her and Harry someplace where no one can find them. Think Neville, you know Harry as well as I." Hermione prodded Neville.

"Actually Hermione, I didn't see Cindy with a port key, I was watching her the whole time, she didn't touch anything other than Harry." Neville explained.

"And now that you mention it, she was walking rather casually for someone who watched her father get killed." Hermione agreed.

“Hermione, did you know, Harry could just put his hand up, and stop any curse, and I do mean any.” Neville asked quietly.

“Yes I did. He only needed to raise his hand, and Voldemort’s curse would have just bounced off. That’s why I think he planned all this, but I think something went wrong. I don’t think he would have strung us along all this time; he’s not cruel. I think he’s really hurt, and where would you go if you were really hurt?” She asked Tonks.

“St. Mungo’s,” Tonks answered without hesitation.

“Exactly, so what I want you two to do is search St. Mungo’s; I know he’s there. He had probably made some huge donation to win him a private wing, and anonymity. Go there under the guise of protecting Ginny, and take turns searching. Don’t let anyone know what you’re doing, if anyone suspects he’s alive, then all he’s worked for will be ruined. Clear?” Hermione asked.

“Clear.” They said in unison.

Hermione paid the bill, and the three apparated to St. Mungo’s, Hermione had yet to visit Ginny, since she had not been allowed to leave the house. When the three had gotten the room number from the nurse at the front desk, they walked up to Ginny’s room.

Ginny had a private suite, owing to the fact that her father was the Minister of Magic. When Hermione, Neville and Tonks entered the room, only Molly and Arthur were there. Molly looked like she hadn’t slept in weeks, and Arthur looked too tired to think.

“Hello.” Hermione greeted them quietly.

“Hermione dear,” Molly said, standing to hug Hermione. “I’m so glad you came.” She continued, holding Hermione at arms length as if examining her.

“How’s Ginny?” Hermione asked.

Molly’s eyes fell. “The same,” she said in a wheeze.

“And you?” Hermione asked.

“As well as can be expected, I’d dare say.” Molly answered.

“Hermione,” Arthur greeted her, hugging her like a daughter.

“And how are you holding up Arthur?” Hermione asked.

“Not well, but trying to keep a handle on everything.” Arthur answered honestly.

“What brings you all by tonight?” Arthur asked smiling.

“I wanted to post added security for Ginny. I’m concerned that the Death Eaters may want to harm her to get to you.” Hermione lied.

“There are Aurors here Hermione; she’s not in any danger.” Arthur answered surely.

“There may be Aurors Arthur, but no Dark Aurors. And I’ve brought two of the highest ranking Dark Aurors in the Department.” Hermione said, motioning to Neville and Tonks.

“Tonks, how wonderful to see you again, I see you’re moving up in the world, a Dark Auror now, and a Major, most impressive.” Arthur said, shaking her hand.

“Thank you Minister.” Tonks responded.

“And you? You must be Neville, I’ve heard so much about you.” Arthur said warmly, shaking his hand in turn.

“Yes Minister. Nice to meet you too,” Neville said uncomfortably.

Hermione sat next to Ginny, lightly stroking her hair. Ginny seemed like an empty shell, her eyes were open, but unfocused, lost in her own mind.

“Don’t worry Ginny, I’ll find them.” Hermione whispered to Ginny.

After a short visit, Hermione instructed Neville and Tonks to stay behind and keep an eye on Ginny, but they knew their real purpose, and they would start immediately.

Hermione said goodbye to the Weasley's, who thanked her for coming by. She apparated home, and went straight to bed, tomorrow would be another day, and maybe a better one.

The search team consisting of Dumbledore, Weasley and Malfoy had combed all of Great Britain in search of a missing six-year-old witch. It had only been the day before when they had finally found Harry's old house, Cindyland. But unfortunately, it was empty. They decided to spend the night.

"All this time wasted." Ron complained.

"Not wasted Mr. Weasley, just unsuccessful." Dumbledore corrected him.

"I don't know, I agree with Weasley, it was wasted. All this time, searching for this house and it's empty." Malfoy said.

"But we didn't know it would be empty, so it was time well spent." Dumbledore argued.

"Whatever. What are we going to do now?" Ron asked to no one in particular.

"That I do not know Mr. Weasley, Harry had unfortunately become very secretive over this passed year; I doubt any of us truly knew what he was thinking." Dumbledore explained.

"There has to be something in this house to give us a clue." Ron said angrily.

"I have used all the knowledge I have; there are no clues. The only thing I found was remnants of spells some might call, dark." Dumbledore answered.

"Dark," Draco asked.

"Yes Mr. Malfoy, dark. Many witches and wizards believe certain types of magic are dark, I, on the other hand, understand that sometimes these spells are useful in keeping us safe. One such spell



Harry used would have placed us in a deep sleep for a month if we were not welcome.” Dumbledore explained.

“I’ve heard of that, it’s in one of my father’s books.” Malfoy declared.

“Yes well, Harry has apparently become very well read.” Dumbledore continued.

“But what are we going to do now!” Ron bellowed angrily.

“We, Mr. Weasley,” Dumbledore started impatiently. “Are going to wait, we need to stop and think this logically. Harry must have found a truly safe place for Cindy, he wouldn’t have given her a port key that lead her somewhere dangerous.” Dumbledore said.

“But where is it more safe than here, we couldn’t even find Harry here when we looked for him, when the whole Ministry was looking for him.” Ron argued.

“How about Hogwarts,” Draco asked suddenly.

“What’s that Mr. Malfoy?” Dumbledore asked.

“Hogwarts, has anyone searched Hogwarts? There are a lot of hidden rooms and passageways, anyone could hide there and not be found.” Malfoy explained.

“No Mr. Malfoy, I do not believe any of us have thought of that. It is conceivable that she could have simply traveled to some unknown room in the castle, and had Dobby and Winky take care of her. That is a possibility.” Dumbledore said.

“Then, let’s go to Hogwarts.” Ron announced.

“Not yet Mr. Weasley, we require sleep, and this house will do just fine for the night. In the morning we’ll apparate to Hogsmeade, and proceed to the castle. But please don’t get your hopes up; Hogwarts is a vast castle, with many rooms hidden from prying eyes.” Dumbledore cautioned.

“Like the Chamber of Secrets?” Ron said, more than asked.

"It good place to start, unfortunately, none of us speak parseltounge, so it may be a problem. But either way, tonight, we need rest." Dumbledore said.

"Agreed," Malfoy said, looking for a good place to sleep.

"I don't know Professor; I think Harry has outsmarted us all." Ron whispered to Dumbledore.

"You may be right Mr. Weasley, but we have to keep searching." Dumbledore whispered back.

They all lay down on camp beds Dumbledore conjured.

"Happy birthday Harry, where ever you are," Ron said, falling asleep instantly.

Ron awoke the next morning to the sound of two tawny owls hooting in the room. One was by his side, the other by Malfoy's.

"Oy, Malfoy!" Ron yelled.

"What?" Draco answered half asleep.

"Mail," Ron said shortly.

Dumbledore was already awake and cooking breakfast. It still amazed Ron that Dumbledore even knew how to cook.

"Oh, our Hogwart's letters," Ron said, opening his.

"Ah, Professor McGonagall is still on top of things, I see." Dumbledore said pleasantly.

"Um, Professor," Ron asked.

"Yes Mr. Weasley?" Dumbledore said, turning towards him.

"There is no book list with this letter." Ron said.

"I didn't get one either." Draco agreed.

"No, I don't suppose either of you would be receiving one." Dumbledore said vaguely.

"Any particular reason, Professor?" Ron asked, trying to hide his annoyance.

"Yes, Mr. Weasley. The other teachers and I agree that those members of the Department for Dark Magic Enforcement have a higher understanding of magic than we can teach, so we've decided to give you all practical classes. No classroom study, just practical exercises." Dumbledore clarified.

"Cool." Ron said smiling.

"And what about our N.E.W.T.'s," Draco asked.

"Practical exercises as well." Dumbledore answered him.

"Really cool." Ron reiterated.

They packed up and left for Hogsmeade. They had a sense of hope, but Dumbledore knew it was a false sense. Cindy would not be in Hogwarts, he knew it for a fact.

## Chapter 2

The halls of St. Mungo's Hospital for Magical Maladies and Injuries had many corridors, most leading to brightly colored rooms, where residents would be healed by the staff. On the east side of the hospital, on the second floor there was one such corridor, except that this one ended to a dimly lit corridor that turned sharply to the left. At the start of this dim corridor there was a burly looking wizard with a black beard, and dark glasses. He made no sound, no movement; he almost appeared like a statue.

A woman wearing white robes approached him from the lift bank at the opposite end of the corridor. She had a small, feminine frame, and a lovely face. She was a total contrast to the guard.

"Good morning John." She said pleasantly.

"Good morning Sarah." The guard greeted her, much friendlier than one would expect.

"How's our patient today?" She asked the guard.

"Quiet. Doesn't make a sound, that one," the guard said, nodding his head to the end of the long dark corridor behind him.

"Well, I'm off to check on him, I'll see you later." She said, rubbing his arm as she passed.

"How about lunch today, Sarah," the guard asked quickly.

"That sounds nice, let's say, twelve." She said.

"Great, I'll meet you in the cafeteria." John informed her.

"See you then." She agreed.

She walked halfway down the empty corridor, at further inspection; it was obvious that there were no doors, no paintings, no markings of any kind, just cold, ugly, gray stones. She stopped about three quarters of the way down, and placed her wand to the wall. The wall

immediately turned into a doorway, not unlike the entrance to Diagon Alley.

At first glance into the room, it was obvious that it was no ordinary hospital room. An oversized bed stood in the middle of the room, accompanied by a smaller, child size bed. The walls were decorated with paintings of people Sarah did not know, and a painting of Hogwarts. There were several overstuffed chairs and sofas lining the room, but Sarah shook her head at the thought that no one ever sat in them.

“And how’s our patient today, Nurse Cindy?” Sarah asked.

“Stubborn.” Cindy answered.

“Indeed.” Sarah said, walking over to the patient in the large bed.

“And how are we, Mr. Potter?” Sarah asked politely.

“Well, you look in marvelous shape, I on the other hand, feel lousy.” Harry snapped.

“Oh, be quiet.” Sarah said, passing her wand over Harry’s entire body.

The wand glowed blue the entire time.

“All healed. You should be free to go in a day or two.” Sarah said.

“If I’m all healed, why do I have to wait?” Harry asked, impatiently.

“Because I said so,” Sarah said, turning to go.

“I’m sorry Sarah; it’s just that I’m growing restless. I’ve been conscious for two weeks now; I want to get out of this place.” Harry said apologetically.

“I understand how you feel Harry, but I don’t want to take any chances.” She said smiling. “Well I’m off, got to attend to the Minister’s daughter.” She declared, turning to go.

“What?” Harry yelled.

Sarah froze in her spot. She had never heard Harry yell, and his voice reverberated off the stone walls causing it to be amplified.

"I, um, I said I have to attend to the Minister's daughter." She answered nervously.

"Which daughter," Harry asked impatiently.

"As far as I know, he only has one." Sarah answered.

"He has three! Which daughter," Harry growled, causing the Healer to take a step back.

"Ginny Weasley," Sarah answered, now shaking with fear.

Harry rose from his bed, slowly walked up to Sarah.

"Did you just say that my fiancé is in this hospital?" Harry asked, trying to calm himself down.

"Ginny Weasley's your fiancé?" She asked disbelievingly.

"Yes Sarah, Ginny is my fiancée; now please tell me what's wrong with her." Harry said, trying desperately to maintain his composure, and failing miserably.

"She's catatonic, ever since the day you, well you almost died." Sarah said, hoping not to upset Harry.

"Anything physically wrong with her," Harry asked.

"No, she just doesn't respond to anyone." Sarah said.

Harry relaxed. "That's all, no problem, five minutes with her, and she'll be fine." Harry said, climbing back into bed.

"Harry, this is serious." The Healer said.

"No, only serious for you, I've had success with this before." Harry said vaguely.

"Oh my God, you healed the Longbottoms!" She screeched.

“And only the Longbottoms know, so keep this under our pact of secrecy.” Harry commanded.

“Yes Harry, I will, but how?” She asked, really wanting to know, to help others. “There’s a really nice patient we’d all love to heal, his name is Gilderoy, Gilderoy Lockhart.” She added.

Harry’s face turned to stone. “And do you know why he is like that?” Harry asked in a menacing tone.

“No.” Sarah answered fearfully.

“Because he used a faulty wand, he tried to obliterate my mind in my second year at Hogwarts, in the Chamber of Secrets, where incidentally, is where I saved Ginny Weasley. So, you will forgive me if I don’t rush to tell you how to heal him.” Harry said with an anger Sarah had never heard.

“I’ll, um; I’ll just go to my next patient.” She said, practically running from the room.

“Daddy, she could cause trouble.” Cindy said, in a very adult-like voice.

“No Cindy, she won’t remember a thing.” Harry said, waving his hand in the air.

“Daddy, can I ask you something?” Cindy asked, climbing onto Harry’s bed.

“Of course, sweetheart,” Harry answered warmly.

“How strong with magic are you? I see how people are almost afraid of you, like you’re something dangerous. Are you really that strong?” Cindy asked.

“Baby,” Harry began, taking her in a tight hug. “I can do things other wizards and witches can’t, but I’m just daddy, no one who isn’t evil should ever fear me. I don’t like to hurt people, not even bad people. I only do what I do because it needs to be done. Can you understand?” Harry asked Cindy hopefully.

"I think so daddy. You try to stop the bad men, and if you can't, you have to hurt them so they don't hurt other people." Cindy said, in a most child-like interpretation.

"Exactly, now, how about a game of Exploding Snap," Harry asked his daughter.

"Goody." She squealed, and ran to get the cars.

Sarah walked up to John the guard. "Still on for this afternoon?" She asked pleasantly.

"Absolutely," John answered excitedly.

"Bye." She said, not remembering anything of her conversation with Harry.

That night, a man in black pants, black shirt, and an open black robe walked down the dimly lit passageway leading to the guard blocking the dark corridor that lead to the entrance to Harry's room, as he walked passed an open door, a woman with violently yellow hair walked into him clumsily.

"Oh, I'm so sorry." The woman said.

The man eyed her, she was very lovely, and had an athletic body, he seemed taken.

"That's just fine by me, you can run into me anytime you like." The man said flirtatiously.

She blushed. "Tonks," she said, introducing herself, and thrusting out her hand.

"Michael." The man said, taking her hand and kissing it. She blushed even more.

"Visiting someone?" She asked.

"You could say that." He answered vaguely.

"You're American." She said; sounding surprised.



“People keep telling me that.” He answered playfully.

“Want to get some tea?” Tonks asked.

“I’d love to, but I have to see my friend, before it gets any later.” Michael said, kissing her hand once again, and continuing down the hall.

“Wait a minute.” Tonks said to herself. “It’s after visiting hours, where is he going?” She wondered.

She watched as he walked up to the guard, waved his hand, and the guard fell. All at once, she had a terrible feeling. She took off after Michael, but by the time she reached the guard’s desk, Michael had vanished.

She walked up and down the corridor, but found nothing, no door, passageway, or even painting to hide a door. She ran back towards Neville.

“You look pretty good for a dead guy.” Michael joked, walking into Harry’s hospital room.

“I hide it well.” Harry joked back.

“And this must be the Cindy everybody’s talking about.” Michael said, smiling at Cindy.

“Daddy, he talks funny.” Cindy said to Harry. Harry and Michael laughed.

“You’re right Cindy, I do talk funny. My name is Michael; I’m a friend of your father’s.” Michael explained.

“Are you a wizard?” Cindy bluntly asked.

“No sweetheart, Michael is no wizard, he’s a Magi.” Harry answered for Michael.

“Ah, you’ve been speaking to Albus.” Michael deduced.

“Yes I have, now tell me, what the hell is a Magi?” Harry asked sounding angry.

“That’s a long story, and very few people know it completely.” Michael attempted to divert the question.

“Well then, ten minutes from now, I’ll be one of them.” Harry said shortly.

“And Cindy,” Michael added.

“Don’t worry, Cindy can keep a secret.” Harry said surly.

“We Harry, are an ancient race, we were not even born of your world. We came thousands of years before man truly developed. Many of our kind disliked your race, a breed bred of apes, with only food and sex on their minds.” Michael paused to sit. “I have lived on this Earth for thousands of years. I once commanded the army that fought to protect man, many of my kind died. Unlike humans, we are spiritual beings; we don’t carry our souls inside like you do, so when one of us dies, they are gone forever. We have gone by many names over the eons, once we were even called gods, but we’re not, nor ever have been. I always liked archangel, that was my favorite.” Michael explained.

“Archangel, as in St. Michael the Archangel,” Harry asked astounded.

“Indeed. But that was before magic. Now many humans can do what I do naturally, you call them witches and wizards, but they’re just men and woman who can do what we do. The word magic actually means, like the Magi. But you Harry, you are the first to take magic to heart. No one has ever told you “it can’t be done,” you walk around finding new and exciting ways of mimicking what the Magi do. Our leaders are quite afraid of you, you know, they think this is a new evolution for man, for wizards. And it is, isn’t it?” Michael asked.

Harry knew immediately what he meant. “Yes, Cindy is quite powerful.” Harry said.

"There you have it, wizards are evolving, and soon the Magi will have true competition. And I will welcome it with open arms." Michael said, trailing off.

"Something wrong," Harry asked.

"Someone's coming, your healer, I have to go Harry, keep my secret safe, I'll come back after your friend Riddle is dead. Farewell my friend." Michael said, vanishing.

"Good bye Michael." Harry said to the spot Michael had just vacated.

Sarah walked into the room.

"I thought I heard voices." Sarah said, looking around.

"Nope, just me and Cindy," Harry said, smiling at his daughter.

"And you, young lady, aren't you supposed to be in bed?" She asked Cindy.

"Daddy is letting me stay up until eleven tonight." Cindy declared.

"Really," Sarah asked Harry.

"Yeah, I want her to sleep very well tonight; it may be our last night here." Harry lied.

Sarah passed her wand over Harry, it glowed blue. "Excellent, I think you'll be ready to leave tomorrow." Sarah said happily.

"Good night Sarah." Harry said warmly.

"Good night Harry, good night Cindy." She said.

"Good night." Cindy said distractedly, as she played with her doll.

The wall did not have time to close, when a familiar voice echoed in the room.

"Nice try Potter." Hermione said smiling.

"I knew I could never fool you Granger, you're too smart for your own good." Harry joked, standing and hugging Hermione tightly.

Hermione started to cry. "I've missed you." She wailed.

"I'm sorry; things just didn't work out like I planned." Harry said, holding her tighter.

"Aunt 'Mione!" Cindy screamed.

"Cindy!" Hermione screamed back, hugging her goddaughter as tightly as she could.

"You know, she may need to breathe, sooner or later." Harry joked at the spectacle.

Hermione stood, and slapped Harry across the face.

"Hey, what was that for?" Harry said, rubbing the spot.

"Everyone's been so worried. Ginny is in the hospital, Ron, Draco and Dumbledore have been scouring the countryside looking for Cindy, and you've both been here, safe and sound." Hermione admonished him.

"I said I was sorry. I needed it to look real; I just didn't expect the damage to be so severe." Harry tried explaining.

"I don't care, Harry Potter, the entire country is mourning your death, it was wrong!" She yelled.

"Alright, I'm sorry, next time I'll be sure to tell you my plan." Harry conceded.

"Good, now give me a hug." She demanded, breaking down, and crying again.

Hermione sat on the edge of Harry's bed, as he lay back down. She stroked his hair absentmindedly.

"When did you recover?" She asked quietly.

"About two weeks ago. I was pretty bad for a while." Harry said honestly.

"Have you heard about Ginny?" Hermione asked.

"Just this morning," Harry answered quietly.

"Can you help her?" Hermione asked hopefully.

"Yeah, she'll be fine by morning. Who else knows about me?" Harry asked, changing the subject.

"Only Neville and Tonks, they've been searching the hospital for me for the last two days." Hermione said.

"You're the most incredible witch that has ever lived. Only you could see through the most accurately planned scheme I could have ever come up with." Harry said, causing Hermione to blush. "Bring them in to see Cindy; I've got to go help Ginny." Harry instructed; and then apparated away.

Hermione smiled when she saw Cindy sound asleep on her bed. She stood, and walked over to the wall, tapped it with her wand, and it formed the doorway. Standing on the other side, looking white with anticipation, were Neville and Tonks, with the healer lying unconscious on the floor.

"Come in quietly, Cindy is sleeping." Hermione instructed.

"Where's Harry?" Neville asked, seeing the empty bed.

"He went to help Ginny." Hermione answered quietly.

"When will he be back?" Tonks asked.

"In a minute or so," Neville answered, remembering how long it took Harry to help his parents.

Harry stepped into Ginny's hospital room; Molly was sitting next to the bed, with her head in her hands, fast asleep. Harry quickly made himself invisible, a trait from one of the other timelines.

He walked over to the other side of the bed, and touched Ginny's forehead, instantly he found himself in Cindyland. He looked around; this version was almost identical to the actual house.

"Good memory." Harry said to himself.

He walked into the kitchen, and found Ginny cooking for Cindy.

"Ginny dear," Harry said to her.

"Oh Harry, you're home." Ginny greeted him, hugging and kissing him deeply.

"What are you up to?" Harry asked politely.

"Oh, just cooking dinner." Ginny answered, going back to the stove.

"What have you been doing since you saw me die?" Harry asked bluntly.

"What are you on about Harry, you're not dead, you're right in front of me." Ginny said smiling.

"I'm right in front of you because I'm alive, but the real you doesn't know that, the real you thinks I'm dead." Harry explained.

"What do you mean the real me, I'm the real me, and this is our house." Ginny said surly, motioning to the walls.

"So, did you quit school, or did you graduate?" Harry asked, pressuring her to remember.

"I, um, graduated." Ginny answered.

"Really, in you fifth, sixth or seventh year," Harry pressed on.

"In my, um," Ginny continued to think.

"And what is the last memory you have of Hogwarts?" Harry asked.

"Um, Death Eaters, but you took care of them." She answered.

“And what happened, just as I took care of them?” Harry kept pushing.

“Um, Cindy went to you.” Ginny said.

“Why?” Harry asked, knowing it was about to happen.

“Because you, um, because you, because you died!” She wailed.

Harry grabbed her quickly, and began to sooth her with words like “it’s ok” and “I’m alive” and “don’t cry.”

Ginny composed herself after what seemed to Harry to be several hours.

“Where am I Harry?” She asked, looking around.

“In your mind, you have to wake up. Here, take my hand.” Harry instructed, helping her to stand. “Ready?” She asked.

“Yes, but are you sure you’re all right, and Cindy too?” She checked one last time.

“I’m sure, but you may have to wait until morning to see me, it is the middle of the night.” Harry answered smiling.

The moment Ginny nodded to Harry, she was awake on the hospital bed.

She looked down, and saw Molly still sleeping in her hands.

“Mum? Mummy,” she prodded her mother.

Molly opened her eyes, and shrieked. “Ginny!” She hugged her daughter as tightly as she could.

“Mum, I’m still weak.” Ginny said.

Molly backed off, wiping the tears from her eyes. “I’m sorry dear, it won’t happen again.” Molly said.

“I have to call your father this instant.” Molly said, standing.

“Mum, please wait, I want to see Harry and Cindy first.” Ginny said.

Molly couldn't contain herself; she began crying again, and managed to say four words through her sobs. “Harry, dead, Cindy missing.”

Ginny gave her a moment, and then interrupted.

“They're fine mum, they're in this hospital.” Ginny said, perfectly sure of herself.

“No dear, Harry's dead, and Cindy's been missing since May.” Molly explained.

“Mother, you're starting to annoy me, Hermione, tell her please.” Ginny said, turning her attention to the girl who just walked in.

Molly turned with a jerk.

“Molly, Ginny is right. Harry is recovering in a room downstairs, and Cindy is with him. It was Harry who brought Ginny back to us.” Hermione explained unable to hide her happiness.

“Show me.” Molly said disbelievingly.

“No Hermione, show us.” Ginny added, attempting to stand, and failing miserably.

“Ginny dear, you shouldn't try standing.” Molly said, rushing to pick up her daughter.

“I'll take her Molly, you just follow.” Hermione instructed.

They made it to the secret doorway without anyone seeing. The guard still lay on the floor from when Michael had knocked him out. Hermione tapped the wall with her wand, and the doorway appeared.

The moment Harry saw Ginny, no one could have stopped him, he grabbed her tightly, lifted her up off the floor, and placed her on his bed.

“Harry, you're not supposed to be out of bed, let alone picking anybody up.” Hermione scolded him.



“For Ginny, I’ll suffer any pain, or death.” Harry said seriously, still staring into Ginny’s eyes.

“Molly could not move, there in front of her was the “dead” Harry Potter, the “missing” Cindy Potter, and the “comatose” Ginny Weasley, all as fine as can be.

“It’s ok Molly, it’s not a dream.” Tonks said, placing a comforting hand on Molly’s shoulder.

“How can you be alive? Everyone saw you get hit with the killing curse, from you-know-who?” Molly asked Harry.

“Well, why don’t we let Hermione answer, she seems to have managed to figure everything else out.” Harry said smiling. “Hermione,” he added, motioning to her.

“Let me see, Voldemort couldn’t kill you, because you’re an animagus.” Hermione said.

“Very good, go on.” Harry pressed.

“Not just any animagus, but a griffin, and a special griffin at that.” Hermione continued.

“That’s my girl, keep going.” Harry said smiling warmly at Hermione.

“Harry’s a Gryffindor.” Hermione clarified.

“We’re all Gryffindors Hermione.” Neville interjected.

“No, not in Gryffindor house, he’s a Gryffindor, a griffin d’ ore, a griffin of gold, a magical creature. One who cannot die by magic. Godric was also a griffin of gold, that’s where he gets his last name. Back when he lived, people didn’t use last names, they were titled by what they were, or did. Like Potter.” Hermione explained, using Harry’s last name.

“Ten points to Gryffindor.” Harry said jokingly.

“So, when Harry was fighting the Death Eaters, he changed all but his outward appearance into a griffin, thereby becoming impervious to magical killing.” Hermione said proudly.

“That’s why I consider you the smartest human on the planet Hermione; you use knowledge like a tool instead of a weapon.” Harry said warmly, making Hermione blush.

“My plan was to make Voldemort think I was dead, unfortunately, his curse hurt me more than expected, I was unconscious until about two weeks ago, the healer just gave me a clean bill of health tonight.” Harry explained.

“Why didn’t you tell us?” Molly asked, sounding hurt.

“I’m sorry Molly; I wanted everyone’s reaction to be spontaneous, if Voldemort thought for a moment that it was a trick, the plan would have failed. Even now it could fail, if word gets out that I’m alive, then everything I’ve worked for will be for naught.” Harry explained.

“Well, we have to tell the family.” Molly declared.

“Not the whole family Molly, I only want you, Arthur, Ron, and Ginny to know right now. And also Dumbledore, Draco and those present, I want to keep those who know to a minimum.” Harry said somewhat sternly.

“Why Draco,” Hermione asked.

“If he’s willing to search for my missing daughter, he’s more than trustworthy in my book, and deserves to know. Besides, how would you explain your sudden lack of mourning on my behalf, he’d be able to tell, you know.” Harry said.

“Point taken,” Hermione conceded.

“Now, for the immediate future, we’ll keep Ginny here.” Harry turned to Tonks. “Notify Arthur of Ginny’s recovery, and bring him here.” Then turned to Hermione, “Notify Ron that Cindy’s been found, and to go to DA headquarters.” He said.

“You know about our new headquarters?” Hermione asked stunned.

“Hermione, it’s constantly in the Daily Prophet, and I’ve had lots of time to kill.” Harry answered her.

“Ginny.” He said turning to her.

“Yes Harry?” She asked.

“Kiss me.” He said slyly, and kissed her deeply.

“Let’s leave these two alone.” Molly said, causing Hermione to do a double take.

Harry and Ginny spent the next two hours alone in bed. Harry knew Arthur would be by soon, so he tried desperately to control himself around her. She did not cooperate.

“Ginny.” Harry warned for the third time. “Your father will be here any minute.” He warned again.

“You remember Harry Potter; I’m of age, according to the Minister.” Ginny teased.

“Yeah, but not even I’ll survive if your brothers find us like this.” Harry said seriously

“Maybe, but even they won’t have a prayer, if they try to keep me from my man.” She said, slyly rubbing his leg. “Or my urges,” she added, sliding her hand up his leg.

“They’re here.” Harry said suddenly, and Ginny stopped.

The doorway magically appeared, and Arthur ran into the room.

“Ginny!” He bellowed, hugging his daughter.

After a moment, he pulled away but froze in place when he saw the person next to Ginny.

“A ghost, you’re a ghost?” Arthur asked astonished to see Harry.

“Not yet, but maybe after I die.” Harry said smiling.

“But you did die.” Arthur said surly.

“No he didn’t daddy. Long story, don’t ask.” Ginny answered.

“So the hospital finally healed you.” Arthur said looking lovingly at his youngest child.

“Ha! This hospital couldn’t cure a cold. Harry did.” Ginny said huffy.

“Thank you Harry, you saved her again.” Arthur said smiling.

“Arthur, she’s my fiancée, I would die to keep her safe.” Harry said seriously.

“I know you would Harry, I would never doubt your love for my daughter, but her being with you has its ups and downs.” Arthur said only half joking.

“It’s because of me she’s always in danger Arthur, but one day, she’ll be my wife, and we could live together, and I could keep her safe twenty four hours a day.” Harry said, staring into Ginny’s eyes.

“Well then marry her already, I want my daughter safe.” Arthur said smiling.

Harry stared at the Minister. Was he kidding? Was he serious? Did he just give his permission to marry Ginny now? Harry was confused. Luckily he was saved by Ginny.

“Daddy, what did you just say?” Ginny asked.

Arthur grabbed both their hands, and looked between them. “I married Molly when we were sixteen, I’ve loved her from the day we met, and I love her even more now. Nothing meant more to me than the day we were married. We were poor, and our families did not approve, so we eloped, Molly never did get a proper wedding.” Arthur was saying, but got cut off.

"But being married to you has been the best years of my life." Molly said, entering the room and sitting at his side.

"I give you my permission to marry whenever you think you're ready." Arthur said warmly.

Harry looked deeply into Ginny's eyes. "I want to wait." Harry said honestly.

Ginny looked saddened by the information. "You do?" She asked sadly.

"Yeah, I don't think we could find a preacher at this time of night, but by morning we should be able to." Harry said as seriously as he could.

"Harry Potter!" Ginny yelled, slapping him with her pillow. Arthur and Molly laughed the most they had laughed in a long time.

"But Harry, what about the secrecy," Molly asked.

"A slight oversight, but if we let Annie and Peggy know, I think the others would understand if they were left out." Harry said, hoping the compromise was acceptable to Molly.

"Good plan Harry. It's always a good idea to keep the mother in law happy." Arthur said jokingly, receiving a playful slap from Molly.

"That would work; besides, do you really want Fred and George at the wedding?" Molly asked jokingly.

"Where do you have in mind for the wedding?" Arthur asked.

"My island off Australia," Harry said quickly.

"You own an Island?" Arthur asked amazed by the news.

"Yeah, it's in the Whitsunday Island chain in Queensland Australia. It's called, Long Island. Its several square kilometers of lush woods, with some of the most beautiful beaches you have ever seen, oh, and that's where I built my castle." Harry added.

“You have been busy.” Arthur said astounded. “Well, if Molly has no objections, how about Saturday, you both can wait two days, can’t you?” He asked playfully.

“Honestly daddy, no. But if that’s what you and mum want, I’ll live with it.” Ginny said, kissing her mother and father on the cheek.

“So, does Ginny change her name to Potter, or do I change my name to Weasley?” Harry asked jokingly.

They all laughed.

“Well, we’ll leave you two lovebirds alone, goodnight Ginny, goodnight, son.” Arthur said smiling.

“Good night, dad, mum.” Harry said, hugging the Weasleys.

When they reached the doorway, Arthur turned back to Harry. “So, who’s the lucky one who gets to tell Ron?” He jokingly asked.

“Ginny.” Harry said smiling.

## Chapter 3

The conference room of the Department for Dark Magic Enforcement sat across the narrow hall from the Department itself. It contained one large U shaped table, capable of seating five hundred people. The chairs were all leather, high backed, armed chairs, and the table was intricately carved with representations of Harry Potter's life. The depictions included Voldemort's attempt to kill him at age 1, Harry's confrontation with Professor Quirral, the Chamber of Secrets, the Tri-wizard Tournament, Voldemort's rebirth, and various depictions of Harry fighting Death Eaters, including Harry's death.

Inside, seated at the center of the U bend, was Minister Weasley, lined up on the Minister's right side were; Dumbledore, Ron, Hermione, Cindy and Draco. On the Minister's left were; Molly, Annie, Peggy, Tonks, and Neville.

They were all talking animatedly about Cindy's return, and Ginny's recovery. Those who knew how they both came about were very secretive, and the others knew something was amiss.

Ginny walked into the room flanked by two very professional looking house elves, Dobby and Winky. They crossed the opening of the U shaped table, and stepped right in front of the Minister. Arthur smiled at his youngest child, and began tapping his glass for attention. The room quieted.

"Good morning." Ginny began. "I'm sure those of you who were not here last night have been wondering what has happened, I'm here to tell you. The pride and joy of the Dark Aurors, Hermione Granger, managed to decipher the events of last May. She managed to solve the most complex riddle ever created by wizard kind, one that no one, not even Voldemort, could have understood. She managed to figure out where Cindy went even though she left no clues, and more importantly, where Harry's body was taken. To explain the entire plan, I give you the beautiful and intelligent, and hopefully, my future sister, General Hermione Granger." Ginny said, pointing to Hermione, who was blushing something fierce.

Ginny walked around the table, flanked by her two body guards, hugged Hermione tighter than ever before, and took Hermione's vacated seat.

"Thank you Ginny." Hermione started, once she was inside the U. "I don't know if I deserve such praise, but thank you. It is my honor to announce a most joyful occasion, but before I do that, I want to explain certain details of that sad day in May. A very smart friend, Tonks, asked me a question that made me realize certain facts that had eluded us before."

"What did she ask?" Ron interrupted.

"She asked what Harry had left you and me when he died." Hermione answered.

"But he didn't leave us anything." Ron interrupted again.

"Exactly Ron, do you think Harry would have entrusted the care of his only daughter, and not seen to the arrangements for his death? I think not, Harry is smarter than anyone has ever given him credit for." Hermione was saying, before being interrupted again.

"Are you saying what I think you're saying, Miss Granger?" Dumbledore asked, causing the others to look at him strangely.

"Yes Professor, I am. But for the benefit of those who have not caught on yet, let me continue. I noticed that on that day in May, Cindy watched her father fall, she casually walked right up to him, and vanished with Harry's body. Why? Why she have done that, how could she have done that, and more importantly; why did she take Harry's dead body?" Hermione paused for effect, looking at the dumbfounded expressions on Ron and Draco's faces. "I concluded she had to have been expecting this, she had to have foreknowledge of the whole situation, nothing else would have been logical. And if she did have foreknowledge, and she knew exactly what she was doing, like guiding Draco into the wall of fire. What did she say to you Draco?" Hermione asked pleasantly to Malfoy.

"She said Harry was expecting me." Draco answered.



“How would she know that? How would she have known the fire would not hurt you? There was really only one answer.” Hermione paused again, hoping someone would finish her statement, she was not disappointed.

“Because the whole thing was planned,” Ron answered smiling.

“What do you say Professor, ten points to Gryffindor?” Hermione jokingly asked Dumbledore.

“Yes, Miss Granger, ten points to Gryffindor.” Dumbledore answered.

“And,” Hermione went on. “If it had been planned, that would have meant that Harry had a suspicion that Voldemort would come out of hiding, and that he would try and kill Harry.” Hermione stopped for a drink of water.

“But if Harry knew Voldemort was coming, than why didn’t he do anything? Unless he planned...” Draco stopped, realizing what he was implying.

“Professor, ten points to Slytherin?” Hermione joked again.

“Fifteen, Miss Granger.” Dumbledore corrected her.

“What?” Annie asked.

“Harry’s alive.” A voice came from behind them.

They all turned to see Harry standing behind them.

“Harry!” Ron screeched, rushing over to hug his best friend. Even Draco rushed over to embrace him, Harry accepted him like a brother.

“It’s good to see you all.” Harry said warmly. “But don’t let me interrupt.” He added, taking the seat next to Ginny.

“Yes, it meant Harry was alive. He planned this down to the most minuscule detail, only; he miscalculated. Voldemort’s killing curse was almost too much for him to absorb, he’s been lying in a hospital

bed in St. Mungo's since that fatal day in May, and he was released this morning." Hermione finished.

"But, one, how did he absorb the killing curse, and two, how did he stay two months in St. Mungo's without anyone knowing?" Draco asked.

"Shall I Harry?" Hermione asked Harry.

"Feel free, we're all family here." Harry answered, staring specifically into Draco's eyes.

"In answer to your first question, Harry is an animagus, a magical creature who cannot be killed by magic, a griffin of gold, to be exact. In answer to your second question, Harry bribed, oh I'm sorry, donated money to St. Mungo's, and received his own private, security wing, and a healer who would never talk. His room is quite large, with, not one bed, but two, one for him, and one for Cindy." Hermione answered.

"Before you continue on, Hermione, I'd like to explain something to the crowd." Harry said, causing Hermione to stop.

"First, let me apologize to all of you, my intention was to fool Voldemort, then tell you of my plan afterwards, unfortunately, as Hermione mentioned, I miscalculated Voldemort's spell, and have been unconscious in the hospital all this time. Second, I want to explain what I have deduced. There are three types of magical creatures who cannot be killed by magic, one you know, is a griffin of gold; the other two are unicorns and phoenixes. If a human becomes an animagus of one of these creatures, he can alter his insides to that of the creature, and still remain outwardly human, but, they cannot be killed by magic. There are only two other people in this world who can accomplish this, and one you know all too well; Voldemort." Harry waited until the whispering stopped. "He's a phoenix, which is why his eyes are red. I am a griffin, when I change internally; my eyes are yellow. Voldemort did not die when his spell rebounded on him sixteen years ago, because he was internally a phoenix, but since a phoenix is reborn from its own ashes, Voldemort could not wait for his body to re-grow to manhood, so he remained a spirit until he found a servant to care for his infant form, Pettigrew. Than he concocted the

scheme to grow to manhood using an ancient spell, that's why he's alive today. Not because he's all powerful, not because he knows more magic than you, but because he's a phoenix animagus." Harry explained.

"Than how do we kill him?" Ron asked.

"You all know of the other timelines by now, and if you don't, ask somebody, but, in one of those timelines a woman I was in love with, a vampire actually, taught me one thing, almost any creature can be killed, if you take his head." Harry said, summoning an intricately carved, ivory handle, tanto bladed sword. He swung the sword like a professional, like someone who had been studying fencing and swordsmanship since the day he was born.

"That will be my job." Harry said banishing the sword to its proper place, the mantle of Potter Castle.

"May I finish now?" Hermione asked impatiently.

"Oh, I'm sorry Hermione, I forgot. Please continue." Harry said, feeling admonished.

"Like I said in the beginning, I have the honor of announcing a most joyful occasion, the wedding of Harry James Potter to Virginia Ann Weasley." Hermione announced, clapping happily.

Only those who knew, Arthur and Molly Weasley, clapped along with her.

"Surprise," Harry joked.

"Mum, dad, you're actually allowing your sixteen year old daughter to get married?" Ron asked confused and angry.

"No son, we're not just allowing it, we suggested it." Arthur corrected his son.

"You what," Ron asked indignantly.

"I told you he would take it bad." Harry whispered to Ginny.

Ginny couldn't take it anymore.

"Ronald Weasley! How dare you question your parents! Harry and I are getting married tomorrow, if you don't like it, too bad!" Ginny screamed, making Ron freeze in place.

Harry turned to Ginny, but spoke so everyone could hear. "Should I still ask him to be best man tomorrow?" He asked.

"I don't think so!" Ginny answered loudly.

Harry turned to Hermione. "You'll still be maid of honor, won't you?" Harry asked tentatively.

"Of course I will Harry, regardless of what some SIMPLE MINDED people might think." Hermione answered, standing behind Harry and Ginny.

Ron looked totally frightened, no one could tell if it was because of his parents, Harry, Ginny or Hermione, but Ron was frozen with fear.

"I um, I um," Ron couldn't speak.

"You what," Ginny yelled.

"I um, would be honored to be the best man?" Ron said, sounding like a question.

"Good answer!" Ginny yelled.

Arthur leaned passed Ginny to Harry. "Are you sure you want to marry her?" He asked jokingly, receiving a slap from Molly and Ginny.

"More than anything, Arthur," Harry said, looking into Ginny's eyes.

Congratulations started flying around, even Draco seemed genuinely happy for Harry and Ginny. They had broken into two small groups, males and females.

"Do Fred and George know yet?" Ron asked Harry.

Harry looked at Arthur, but he turned away.

"They won't be coming, no one outside this room will be there, it'll just be us." Harry said sadly.

"Why? It should be a huge affair." Ron said confused.

"Because Ron, no one is supposed to know Harry's alive." Neville explained, defending Harry.

"But you trust Fred and George, don't you?" Ron asked, with a small bark in his voice.

"I love them like brothers, and I trust them with my life, but, they have big mouths, if Voldemort even suspects I'm alive, my trap won't work." Harry explained to Ron.

"Ron, please accept Harry's decision to keep the wedding party small, it is the right choice." Arthur added, causing Ron to agree.

"Where are you holding the wedding?" Neville asked, realizing he didn't know.

"My house," Harry answered distractedly.

"Cindyland," Draco asked.

"Nope, Potter Castle," Harry corrected him.

"Potter Castle, Harry?" Dumbledore asked.

"Yeah," Harry said, smiling sheepishly.

"And where is Potter Castle? Or are we not to know?" Ron asked.

"Australia, on an island," Harry answered honestly, without giving too much detail.

"You have a castle on an island, in Australia? How much money do you have?" Draco asked greedily.

"Plenty," Harry answered vaguely.

"When do we leave?" Ron asked.

Harry looked at his watch. "Twenty two minutes, thirteen seconds." Harry answered specifically.

"Huh?" Ron asked.

"Dobby will be here with the port keys at that time." Harry clarified.

"Oh." Ron said, understanding.

When they all rejoined into one group, Hermione walked up to Harry. "Potter Castle, is there anything you would like to tell me?" Hermione asked playfully.

"Um, yeah, there is, make sure you wipe your feet when you enter." Harry joked back. Hermione playfully slapped his arm.

"So, when are you and Ron tying the knot?" Harry jokingly asked.

"With Ron, maybe he'll get the nerve in thirty or forty years." She answered, not entirely sure if she was kidding.

"He loves you, you know." Harry whispered to Hermione, while staring at Ron.

"I know, he tells me, but I just don't know about him sometimes." Hermione said honestly.

Harry snapped his head up. "We'll continue this at the castle." Harry whispered to Hermione. "Everybody, take whatever Dobby hands you." Harry instructed, and watched as people kept disappearing to the castle.

Harry waited, only Draco was left, when Draco picked up the port key, nothing happened.

"Hey, mine didn't work." He said to Dobby, who popped out. "Hey!" He yelled.

"It's all right Draco, I just wanted to talk in private, yours will work in five minutes." Harry explained.

Draco got nervous, all of a sudden.

“I wanted to thank you personally. You went in search of my daughter when you thought she was in danger. That, to me, makes you a good friend. I wanted to give you something.” Harry said, handing him a small box.

“What is it?” He asked, opening the box.

“It’s the ring of the Dark Aurors, that stone.” Harry pointed to the blue stone on the ring. “Is a pure blue diamond, its color is so rare, it would be worth millions of Galleons in today’s money.” Harry said smiling.

“Millions,” Draco asked disbelievingly.

“Godric Gryffindor told me where he hid my inheritance. He told himself before he died that he would wait until a worthy descendant would be born, and he would give him or her, his fortune. That diamond is one of five perfect blue diamonds in his collection, one I give to you, one to my best man, one to Neville, who has always stood by me, one to Arthur, who is the only father I have ever known, and the last one, to Dumbledore, who has watched over and protected me since I was one year old. I want you to wear it with pride. You are a Dark Auror, the best of the best. And my friend,” Harry explained.

“Harry, I can’t accept this.” Draco said looking longingly at the ring.

“You can, and you will. It’s a token of my respect and admiration, please accept it.” Harry said, pleadingly.

Draco looked at Harry. “I accept it.” He said.

“Good, let’s go.” Harry said, waiving his hand at Draco’s port key, activating it.

When Harry apparated to the entrance to Potter Castle, he saw the others staring around disbelievingly. The Castle had the approximate size of Hogwarts, and stood at the top of the Island, looking over other islands in the Whitsunday chain, as well as mainland Australia.

“You can see the Great Barrier Reef from the turrets.” Harry informed the awestruck crowd.

“Harry, this place is amazing.” Hermione told him.

“Thanks. Let’s get inside; I’d like to eat lunch soon.” Harry said, opening the front doors.

Upon entering, they were all dumbstruck with the sheer vastness of the Greeting Hall. It measured sixty meters by sixty meters, and had huge, floor to ceiling windows on either side of the door. At the opposite end of the Hall, there was a double staircase that wound in opposite directions. Immediately to the left of the entrance was the Ball Room, almost as vast as the entrance, but much more brightly lit by the wall of windows at the southern side of the room. Immediately to the left of the entrance was the library, two stories of floor to ceiling bookshelves, with various chairs, tables and desks scattered around.

“Wow.” Ron said, looking around.

“Consider this your home as well; the master bedroom, Cindy’s bedroom, and the servants quarters are all marked, feel free to choose which bedroom you prefer.” Harry told the crowd.

“How many bedrooms are there?” Arthur asked.

“One hundred and fifty,” Harry said matter-of-factly.

“Whoa.” Draco said.

“Each bedroom had its own ensuite bathroom, so don’t worry, whichever one you choose, will be good.” Harry explained.

“Dobby,” Harry called out. Dobby appeared at his feet. “Have a house elf escort each guest, have them choose a bedroom, and prepare for measurements.” Harry instructed the elf bowed deeply.

“How many house elves do you have?” Hermione asked.

“Twelve and they’re all free elves, just in case you were curious.” Harry told her.

“And what do you mean measurements?” Draco asked.



“Tuxedos, we’re dressing like muggles for the ceremony.” Harry explained.

“Muggles,” Neville asked.

“The preacher presiding over the ceremony is a muggle, so we’re having a muggle wedding.” Ginny explained.

“Do you have a gown?” Peggy asked excitedly.

“With a train you won’t believe.” Ginny said smiling.

“I’m going to get cleaned up, Dobby, have our guests escorted to their rooms.” Harry said, taking Ginny’s and Cindy’s hands and going up the stairs.

The guests choose their bedrooms, and were each measured by the house elves. Harry had the clothing custom made, so the measurements were phoned to the local tailor on the mainland. The weather couldn’t have been more agreeable, the air was warm, the sky was clear, and the day of the wedding was expected to be the same.

They met at seven o’clock that evening in the cavernous Dinning Hall. Easily as long and as wide as the Dinning Hall in Hogwarts, but with only one table spanning the center of the room. They all congregated at the far end, where the dishes and silverware had been carefully placed.

Harry entered the room with Ginny on his right and Cindy on his left. They walked the length of the room, like a king and his queen entering a ball. Harry was dressed in a black Armani suit, and Ginny and Cindy wore matching Armani evening gowns. The small group stared as they walked the length of the Dining Hall.

The others wore suits and dresses Harry had preordered before their arrival and the finishing touches were done after their measurements were taken. The group looked like a respectable muggle dinner group, meeting to discuss various financial situations.

Dumbledore, with his long hair and beard, stood out like a sore thumb. Harry had to stifle a laugh when he saw him.

"Friends, please take your seats." Harry said regally.

"Tonight we celebrate the eve of our wedding, I know the group is small, but it is our family. Ginny and I have some gifts for you all; I hope you'll appreciate the gesture." Harry announced, summoning gifts out of thin air.

Harry handed the gifts to Ron, Neville, Dumbledore and Arthur, while Ginny handed the gifts to Molly, Hermione, Annie and Peggy.

"Now the gifts for the men are identical, and the gifts for the women are identical, but make no mistake, they are all special." Harry explained.

Hermione walked over to Harry.

"What about Draco?" She whispered in his ear.

"Oh, my apologies, for those of you who don't know, I have taken the liberty of giving Draco his gift, earlier today." Harry clarified for the group.

They began opening their presents.

"Harry, this ring is beautiful." Ron said, staring at the gift.

"And worth a king's ransom, so don't lose it." Harry warned.

"A king's ransom," Arthur asked for clarification.

"Millions," Draco answered.

"What?" Neville asked.

"Those stones are part of my inheritance from Godric Gryffindor; he told me where they were. Each stone is a flawless dark blue diamond, so rare, only five perfect specimens have ever been discovered, these five." Harry said, not specifying that Godric told him this in another timeline.

"Godric Gryffindor, Harry? Inheritance?" Arthur asked.

"Yes. I am Godric's heir." Harry said simply.

The girls had watched and waited until the men opened their gifts.

"Ginny, just how rich is Harry?" Peggy asked.

"Before April, filthy rich, after April, the richest," Ginny said smiling.

"You're marrying the richest wizard in the world?" Annie asked.

"Um, yeah," Ginny answered.

"Well then, let's open our gifts." Hermione said jokingly.

The women opened their gifts; each received a single diamond necklace, with a stone the size of which they had never seen.

"Harry? How many karats are these diamonds?" Annie asked.

"They are approximately 10 karats each. They are called the Tears of Joy. They are pink diamonds, in a tear shape, that were mined over a thousand years ago. An American jeweler placed a value on each one at twenty million U.S. dollars, about 2 and ½ million Galleons." Harry explained.

"Harry. We can't accept these." Molly said.

"Of course you can, you're the First Lady of Magic, you should always wear such jewels, and I'll be sure to buy them every year." Harry said smiling.

"Very smart Harry, make the mother in law happy." Arthur said again, smiling. They all laughed.

The five-course dinner that Winky prepared was exceptional, the roast, the potatoes, the vegetables, were all perfect, they all retired to the library as full as they could be.

The library, as it had been in Cindyland, was Harry's favorite room, he had designed it to be the gathering room for all his future dinner

parties. The chairs and the sofas were all plush and comfortable, making them perfect for after dinner conversation.

"So Ginny, what are your honeymoon plans?" Hermione asked loudly.

She blushed slightly. "We're staying here." She said softly.

"In this big castle, just the two of you," Hermione pressed.

"No, just the three of us," Ginny corrected her.

"Actually Ginny, I was thinking of taking my grand daughter home for two weeks, to get to know her better." Molly said smiling.

"Really gam'ma, two whole weeks," Cindy asked excitedly.

"Absolutely dear, and we can have a whole bunch of fun." Molly said to Cindy.

"And we could get to know our niece." Annie added.

"It's settled, we take Cindy for two weeks then." Arthur added.

"Ginny? Is this a private conversation, or can anybody join in," Harry asked, uncomfortable talking about honeymoons with his future in-laws.

"I don't think we're allowed to join in Harry, apparently these things have been decided for us." Ginny answered slightly miffed.

"Get used to it Harry, I think you've lost your vote in your own life." Draco joked.

"No, I think he just lost his life. Again," Ron also joked. They all laughed.

"Well, I'm taking this beautiful creature to bed." Arthur announced, picking Cindy up off the floor.

As soon as Arthur and Cindy were gone, Molly spoke again.

"I don't think a six year old child should be on a honeymoon." Molly said.

"Molly, it's not really a honeymoon, it's more of a self-imposed prison sentence. I made a conscious decision to fake my own death; my poor bride has to live with that decision. I fully expect to take her somewhere romantic, after Voldemort is finally gone." Harry explained.

"Be that as it may, this gilded cage of yours is perfect for a honeymoon, you have a private beach, plenty of servants, and a spectacular view." Molly argued.

"And one indoor pool and one outdoor pool," Ginny added slyly.

"Planning any skinny dipping this week Harry?" Hermione asked slyly.

"Ok, I think that mine and Ginny's love life has become a taboo conversation in my home, thank you very much." Harry answered her.

"Harry." Dumbledore said, getting everyone's attention. "They only want the best for you, and for Ginny. Enjoy Molly's gift to you, and enjoy Hermione's teasing, this is what family is all about, this is what evil men and women cannot destroy, the love of family." Dumbledore said seriously.

Arthur walked back in just after Dumbledore's speech.

"Harry, you have some daughter." Arthur said, sitting down.

"She means the world to me." Harry said smiling.

"Can you explain to me how it is that she probably knows more magic than most fully qualified wizards?" Arthur asked, causing the room to look at him.

"I have been teaching her personally since I adopted her. She has to be safe." Harry said, feeling the stares of everybody in the room.

"Molly." Arthur said turning to his wife. "Do you know our granddaughter can perform wandless magic, and elemental magic?" Arthur asked.

"She can? How," Molly asked astounded.

"And she's an animagus as well." Harry added guiltily.

"A what," Arthur asked.

"She's a unicorn." Ginny said simply.

"You knew?" Molly asked.

"Of course, tomorrow I will be her mother for crying out loud." Ginny said sounding angry.

"How can a child of six, learn so much magic?" Dumbledore, of all people, asked.

"Albus, we are entering a new era for wizards, the realization that anything is possible. Cindy is living proof. She could defend herself against even the most dangerous Death Eater, she has to, she's my daughter." Harry answered.

"Are you teaching Ginny?" Dumbledore asked.

"Yes he is." Ginny answered.

"Then Miss Weasley, or should I say Mrs. Potter, you will teach a select group of instructors at Hogwarts, who'll in turn, teach a select group of students." Dumbledore commanded.

"I will?" Ginny asked.

"And in return for your assistance, I'll allow you to live here while you go to school. I presume Harry has already taught you how to bypass the anti-apparition barriers we have on the school?" Dumbledore asked.

"He has." Ginny answered honestly.

“Anybody else able to bypass the anti-apparition barriers,” Dumbledore asked the group. Only Neville raised his hand.

Only Neville raised his hand.

“Mr. Longbottom, I’m surprised. Well, you’ll have to visit the Potters on the weekends for added instruction, and then report back to me.” Dumbledore commanded.

“Harry?” Tonks asked, speaking for the first time since entering the library. “How about me, I’m not in school, I have time for training.” Tonks pointed out.

“You are welcome here whenever you want. I’ll personally train you if you like, but, you will have to put in an eight hour day at the Ministry.” Harry said.

“Understood,” Tonks agreed.

“Annie, Peggy, I’d like you to come for training as well.” Harry said.

“How do we get here?” Peggy asked.

“You’ll live here. I have a hundred and fifty bedrooms, I’m sure you could find somewhere to stay.” Harry explained.

“Any room for me,” Molly asked, making Arthur look at her. “With Annie and Peggy here, I’ll be all alone at the Burrow.” She added, looking at Arthur pleadingly.

“And you can stay here too Arthur. There is definitely no place safer in the magical world, I guarantee it.” Harry said surly.

“People might suspect something, if I’m not home.” Arthur said.

“Don’t worry; I know some tricks. They’ll call your house on the floo network, and the fireplace in your office here will activate, no one will ever know your not home.” Harry argued.

Arthur thought for a moment. “What about the twins, and Percy?” Arthur asked.

“Just tell them you’re in hiding for security’s sake, they won’t question it, you’re the Minister.” Harry argued again.

“You’re making it difficult to say no Harry. Are you sure you want your in-laws living with you, being newlyweds and all?” Arthur asked.

“No, not my in-laws, my family,” Harry corrected him, making Molly cry.

“Than it’s settled,” Dumbledore said standing. “Arthur, Molly, Annie and Peggy will live here, Ginny and Tonks will commute daily, and Neville on weekends. The Death Eaters won’t stand a chance.” He added pleasantly.

“Hey, what about me and Ron,” Hermione asked feeling left out.

“As soon as you and Mr. Weasley have learned to bypass the anti-apparition barriers, you’re free to come and go, but only to the Potter Castle.” Dumbledore said.

“And when that happens, with Albus’ permission, you’re both welcome to live here.” Harry added.

“Do you really want Ron living with you and Ginny?” Hermione asked playfully.

“Hermione, my castle is so large; he and I could walk around for a week, and never run into each other.” Harry said honestly.

“It’s getting late.” Arthur said, looking at the grandfather clock at the end of the room. “We all have a big day tomorrow.” He added, standing.

“Good night my guests,” Harry said smiling at them.

They all started walking upstairs. Harry stayed back with Ginny.

“So, where are you sleeping tonight?” She asked, implying he wasn’t sleeping in their room.

“I guess a guest room.” Harry answered, hugging her tightly.



"Well, you can't very well see the bride before the ceremony, now can you?" She added.

"Good night Ginny, I love you." Harry said, kissing Ginny deeply.

"How did I get so lucky?" Ginny asked kissing him back.

"Ron," Answered Harry.

"Ron?" She asked.

"Yeah, if I hadn't become best friends with Ron, then I probably would never have gotten to know you better, and I probably would never have fallen in love with you." Harry explained.

Ginny got a strange look on her face. "I never really thought of it, quite like that." Ginny admitted.

"You'd better get to bed, one minute until midnight." Harry said, making Ginny run for the staircase.

"Women," Harry said to himself smiling.

When Ginny awoke the next morning, she found Molly, Hermione, Cindy, Annie, Peggy, Tonks and Winky all staring back at her.

"Ambush," she asked groggily.

"Not quite, miss." Winky said, handing her a note from Harry.

"And what are you girls doing here at this ungodly hour?" She asked again.

"We're here to get you ready." Molly said smiling.

"And to see the dress," Peggy added.

"Ginny, is this the master bedroom?" Hermione asked.

"Yeah, why," Ginny asked back.

“Because I’ve never seen a bedroom this large before, you have a dining table, a sitting room, a bathroom that’s bigger than the Gryffindor common room, and a two-story closet, that’s bigger than our dorm room. So, I figured, if it wasn’t the master bedroom, I would claim this as my own.” Hermione explained, making them all laugh.

“Breakfast misses.” Winky declared, standing next to the en-suite dining table.

The women sat down to eat, Ginny, as nervous as she was, still managed to finish off her entire breakfast.

“Keep eating like that and you won’t fit into your wedding dress.” Annie joked.

“Keep talking like that and you’ll get to see, first hand, the wonderful dungeon Harry had built in the basement.” Ginny joked back.

“What was the note about?” Tonks asked.

“I don’t know I forgot to read it.” Ginny said, fumbling for the note.

“Oh, wedding instructions. Harry wants the procession to start in a secret exit to the castle and to proceed to...” Ginny started to tear up.

“What?” Hermione said, grabbing the note. “Oh, that’s so romantic.” Hermione exclaimed.

“What?” Molly asked.

“They’re getting married on the beach.” Hermione said, crying herself.

“Wow, that is romantic, a barefoot wedding.” Tonks added.

“Was this a surprise?” Peggy asked.

“He told me not to worry, that I would love it, and I do.” Ginny said, starting to cry again.

The women finished their breakfast, and Molly began on children.

“So, have you and Harry discussed children?” Molly asked.

“Mother, she hasn’t even gotten married yet.” Annie scolded her.

“That’s ok Annie, actually we have. As soon as I’m ready, Harry wants to start a large family, his exact words were; I want to give your parents a run for their money.” Ginny said blushing.

“And when will you be ready?” Molly asked.

“I’m not sure, after school definitely, but I was also thinking about starting my own clothing line. So maybe I’ll put it off a bit.” Ginny answered honestly.

“Not too long, Cindy will tied me over, but she’ll want brothers and sisters as soon as possible.” Molly said, hugging and kissing Cindy, who was now on her lap.

“And I want more godchildren, who knows when Ron will ever get up the courage to propose.” Hermione added.

“Knowing my son like I do, you’ll end up proposing.” Molly said.

“Excuse me misses, the clothes is here.” Winky interrupted.

“Let’s have a look then.” Molly said standing.

Harry had had a quiet night. He awoke just on time; he was surprised to see he wasn’t as nervous as he feared. He, unlike the girls, went down to the Dining Hall to eat his breakfast.

When he arrived, he saw all the men deep in conversation about Voldemort. But the conversation came to an abrupt end the moment Harry entered the room.

“You don’t need to stop because of me.” Harry said, joining them at the table.

“Yes we do, you should only be thinking about my daughter.” Arthur said.

“Take my word for it Arthur, that’s all I ever think about.” Harry said honestly.

"Nervous?" Ron asked.

"Actually, no, I have no doubts about what I'm doing, I love Ginny, and I want to spend the rest of my life with her." Harry answered seriously.

"You don't suspect any trouble, do you?" Neville asked.

"Trust me Neville; no one will ever be able to find me, or anybody else, here. There is more magic protecting this island, and the surrounding water, than the rest of the magical community combined. I took the liberty of infusing my magic into, not only the castle, but the entire island itself." Harry explained.

"The entire island Harry, do you realize how much magic that is?" Dumbledore asked.

"Of course I do, I was laid up for a week." Harry answered.

"So, what time is the ceremony?" Dumbledore asked.

"One o'clock. On the beach," Harry answered, swallowing a mouth full of eggs.

"On the beach, why," Ron asked.

"Because clod, it's romantic." Draco answered. "Do you even have a romantic bone in your body? I sympathize with Hermione." Draco added.

"I'm romantic." Ron argued.

"Really, what have you ever done that's romantic?" Draco asked.

"I went out with Hermione to a very expensive restaurant." Ron declared.

"Sorry son, that one doesn't count, Harry planned the entire dinner, and invited you and Hermione." His father corrected him.

"Ok, well, there was that time when, when I, I'm romantic." Ron said again, unable to think of a single romantic thing he had ever done.

“Son, you and I really need to talk.” Arthur told Ron.

“Draco, I just realized, I don’t know much about your personal life, anybody special?” Harry asked, changing the subject.

“Actually Harry, there is this one girl, I was always afraid to get to close, because my father wouldn’t like her, but now, maybe I will.” Draco said honestly.

“Why wouldn’t your father like her?” Neville asked.

“Because she’s a muggle,” Harry answered.

“How did you know?” Draco asked.

“Because I know your father,” Harry lied, knowing full well his knowledge came from another timeline where that Draco had feelings for a muggle.

“Yeah, Harry’s right, she’s a muggle. But so beautiful, I have always told myself it was lust, but now I know I love her.” Draco said smiling.

“How about you, Neville,” Harry asked.

“No, you’ll laugh.” Neville said shyly.

“No we won’t, or rather, I won’t.” Harry corrected himself.

“I kind of have a thing for, um, Luna.” Neville said.

Ron burst out laughing. “You like loony Luna?” He said between fits of laughter.

“Yes I do!” Neville said indignantly.

“Ron, I like Luna, and I consider her a friend, and an asset.” Harry said seriously. “Neville, go for it. If anyone deserves to be happy, it’s you and Luna.” Harry said honestly.

“Thanks Harry.” Neville said, feeling confident.

“And you Albus?” Arthur asked jokingly. “Any young girls on the horizon for you,” he added.

Dumbledore laughed. “I don’t think there’s a woman that blind on the planet.” Dumbledore joked back. They laughed.

Harry took the men on a tour of the castle; he showed them the turrets, the dungeons, and the training room. They were all impressed with the immense size of the place. Besides having five floors above the ground level, it had ten stories below the ground level, including several ways of escaping undetected.

Nothing impressed the Minister more than the room Harry had chosen for him and Molly.

Here Arthur, I’d thought you’d like this.” Harry was saying.

“When did you put my name on the door?” Arthur asked.

“When I had the castle built.” Harry answered.

“You knew we’d be staying?” Arthur asked amazed.

“I had hoped, yes. My perfect world consists of the Weasleys, my beautiful wife Ginny, my beautiful daughter Cindy, and all my friends, living with me in this castle, that’s why I built it.” Harry said, opening the door.

The five men stopped dead in their tracks. It was an identical copy of the Burrow, even the view from the windows were the same. Neither Arthur nor Ron could believe the accuracy of the duplicate.

Ron walked up to the clock that showed the whereabouts of the Weasley family, and noticed the duplicate had an extra location added, Potter Castle.

“Wicked,” Ron said.

“Harry, this is amazing. Anyone calling would never notice the difference, even the view is perfect.” Arthur said.

"I'm glad you like it, I used my pensive to get the details perfect." Harry explained.

"I'm impressed Harry, the planning, the thought you've put into this castle, it's amazing." Arthur said.

"Just wait until we get to Dumbledore's chamber." Harry announced.

"Expecting me soon Harry?" Dumbledore asked.

"Actually, yes," Harry answered honestly.

"And where's Malfoy Manor?" Draco asked jokingly.

"Sorry Draco, I didn't think you'd want to remember that place, so I designed one for you, you'll like it." Harry told him.

"Let's go see it then." Draco demanded.

"Nope, unfortunately I have to get ready. My wedding starts in one hour." Harry announced, looking at his watch.

They all headed for their chosen rooms. Harry showered and dressed quickly, and met the others in the entrance hall of the castle.

When they all arrived, Harry looked at the five men.

"You guys look good." Harry announced.

"I always look good." Draco declared.

"You ready Harry?" Ron asked.

"You have the rings?" Harry asked back.

"Oops." Ron said running back up the stairs.

"There's still time to choose a reliable best man." Arthur whispered to Harry.

"No Arthur, there is nobody more perfect than Ron." Harry whispered back.

They all made their way down to the beach. The pastor and his assistant were there waiting for them.

“Mr. Potter, congratulations.” The pastor said.

“Thank you Pastor, may I introduce the father of the bride, Arthur Weasley, the brother of the bride, and my best man, Ronald Weasley, our former Headmaster, Albus Dumbledore, and my two good friends, Draco Malfoy and Neville Longbottom.” Harry introduced them. They all shook hands.

“Well Harry, I have to go fetch my daughter.” Arthur announced, following the prepared trail back towards the castle.

“Places then gentlemen,” the pastor announced.

Harry took his place on the right side of the makeshift alter, Ron stood next to him, then Dumbledore, Neville and Draco. They waited for the sound of the wedding march.

The music started, and all talking stopped. Cindy was the first one to come around the bend; Harry had chosen light blue gowns for the women, and bouquets of white roses. Cindy looked like an angel.

Next to come out was Molly; she was beaming, never had she seemed prouder of any of her children. She walked up to Harry, and kissed him lightly on the cheek.

Then Tonks emerged, no one had ever seen her look so feminine, she was stunning. She changed the color of her hair to match the roses she was carrying, pure white.

Then Annie and Peggy came out together. Harry had noticed how alike Peggy and Ginny looked before, but now it was downright spooky. They kissed Harry on each cheek, and took their places next to Molly.

When Hermione emerged, everyone heard Ron say “wow”; she was so incredibly beautiful, that even Neville and Draco couldn’t keep their eyes off of her.



Then the moment of truth arrived, Ginny. She emerged in a form fitting wedding gown with a ten-meter, magically enhanced train. She wore a veil of such a thin fabric that it was almost invisible. She had done up her hair with flowers, and the glow she wore on her face, made her look even more stunning than Harry could ever have imagined.

Ginny took her place beside Harry, he couldn't take his eyes off her, she was so beautiful. The preacher smiled, and began his speech.

"Dearly beloved, we are gathered here today to bear witness to the joining of Harry James Potter to Virginia Ann Weasley. I understand this was a match made in Heaven, Harry and Ginny have been in love for many years now, and have decided to bond their relationship in holy matrimony. If there is any just cause why these two should not be wed, please speak now, or forever hold your peace." The preacher paused. "Then, do you have the rings?" The preacher asked Ron, who quickly handed them to him. "Harry, please place this ring on her finger, and recite your vow." The preacher instructed.

"I, Harry James Potter, take you Virginia, to be my lawfully wedded wife. I vow to love only you, to protect you, to keep you happy for as long as I shall live, and longer." Harry said, placing the ring on her finger.

"Virginia, please place this ring on Harry's finger, and recite your vow." The preacher instructed her.

"I, Virginia Ann Weasley, do take you Harry, to be my lawfully wedded husband; I also vow to love only you, to honor you, to cherish you, and to make you the happiest man on Earth, for as long as I shall live, and longer." Ginny said, placing the ring on Harry's finger.

"What God has brought together, let no man put asunder. By the power vested in me, I now pronounce you man and wife. You may kiss the bride." The preacher instructed Harry.

They kissed deeply.

## Chapter 4

The preacher and his assistant took the launch back to the mainland immediately after the ceremony, the rest made their way back to the castle. Dobby, Winky and the other house elves had spent the entire night preparing the Ball Room for the reception. Harry had enchanted the room to look like a living forest, with a small meadow for the tables, living trees, and fairies.

When Ginny walked in with Harry, she was met with the most spectacular room she had ever seen. The elves had apparently added their own ideas into the mix, and made the entire ceiling glow a bright pink color. There was only two tables in the meadow, the first was for Harry, Ginny, Cindy, Ron, Hermione, Arthur and Molly, the second was for the remaining guests; Dumbledore, Annie, Peggy, Tonks, Neville and Draco.

None had taken their seats; they all decided dancing was the first order of business. Harry has both a wizarding wireless and a muggle radio for music. Harry watched, as Arthur took Ginny out for the first dance. They seemed to move well together; apparently Arthur was no stranger to dancing. Harry waited patiently until they had made two turns around the makeshift dance floor in the meadow, before turning to Molly.

"May I have this dance, mum?" Harry asked.

"It would be a pleasure, son." She answered.

Harry danced Molly across the entire meadow. Everyone watched in awe as Harry gracefully swayed with his new mother in law.

"Did you know Harry could dance like that?" Hermione asked Ron.

"No, I thought he was as bad as me." Ron answered.

"Is there anything he can't do well?" Draco asked Ron and Hermione, sounding jealous.

As soon as the song was over, Harry and Arthur exchanged partners, and began dancing their wives to the next song.

Harry, having memories of the other timelines, knew exactly how Ginny danced, and was able to anticipate every move. They danced like professionals who had been practicing for years. Even Arthur and Molly had to stop to watch them. After a moment, the others began dancing, Ron was lead out kicking and screaming by Hermione, Neville lead out Tonks, Draco danced with Cindy, Dumbledore invited Annie, and Peggy was left watching.

Harry laughed out loud when he saw Cindy with her feet on top of Draco's dancing around. Draco had never looked happier. Neville, who Harry always knew was not very graceful, moved with surprising style, evidently, he had been taking lessons. Poor Hermione was stuck with the gangly, ungraceful Ron; he repeatedly stepped on Hermione's feet, and turned left, when he should have turned right. Dumbledore on the other hand could have given Harry a run for his money as the best dancer there.

"I'm going to save Hermione." Harry whispered into Ginny's ear.

"Please, if she keeps dancing with Ron, she won't be able to walk for a month." Ginny said jokingly.

Harry kissed her deeply, and walked over to Ron and Hermione. At that moment, Ron had tripped over his own feet, but Harry was there to catch him.

"Thanks mate." Ron said, composing himself.

"May I cut in?" Harry asked politely.

"My pleasure," Hermione answered for Ron, pushing him off to the side.

Harry, having also danced with Hermione in the previous timeline, did as well with her as he did with Ginny. The two moved gracefully around the dance floor, causing Ron to go slightly pink.

"Harry, you're incredible." Hermione said to him.

“Ah, Ginny’s been talking.” Harry joked, receiving a slap in the arm from Hermione.

“You know that’s not what I meant.” She said blushing.’

“Oh, you meant the dancing, yeah well; I may have had a lesson or two.” Harry said smiling.

“But come to think of it, Ginny may have mentioned a thing or two about your other talents as well.” Hermione said teasingly.

“Jealous?” Harry asked.

“Depends, are you going to teach Ron?” She asked slyly, making Harry laugh.

“Depends, how much money you got?” Harry joked back, making Hermione laugh.

They danced the remainder of that song, before Harry respectfully excused himself, and went back to his bride. Luckily Hermione was saved again, this time by Dumbledore.

Harry and Ginny stood watching the others dance. Harry laughed as Molly led Ron around, instructing him every step of the way.

“So Mrs. Potter, I hear you’ve been singing my praises to Hermione.” Harry teased, Ginny turned red.

“Well, you know Harry, girls talk.” Ginny said sheepishly. “You’re not upset, are you?” Ginny added nervously.

“Of course not, I was just teasing. I tricked Hermione into letting it slip, that’s all. I don’t care who you tell, they’ll just end up jealous.” Harry said, hugging her tightly.

“Was she jealous?” Ginny asked curiously.

“Well, she did say she wanted me to teach Ron.” Harry answered slyly, Ginny laughed.

"No way, your secrets are just for me." Ginny responded, kissing Harry.

When the music stopped, they all took their seats; it was time for the toast. Ron nervously stood, and all eyes were upon him.

"Friends and family, as tradition dictates, it is time for the toast. I have known my sister all her life and I love her dearly. She deserves nothing but the best, so I am very pleased to see she is getting it. Harry Potter is the most generous man I have ever met, he once told me that if my parents would accept it, he would gladly give every knutt he had, to them. I believed him then and I believe he'd do it now. He has helped, and watched over my family for years, he even saved Ginny's life before he really knew her. He's brave, kind and loving, he is the perfect match for my sister." Ron looked right at Harry and Ginny. "I love you both, and I wish nothing but the best. Congratulations." Ron said, raising his glass, and drinking.

Harry stood, and walked over to Ron, he hugged him tightly.

"That was beautiful mate." Harry said during the embrace.

"My turn," Hermione interrupted. "I know, it hasn't been tradition for that long, but as the maid of honor, I'm going to make a toast too. "I have considered Harry my brother these last six years. Ginny, I have considered my sister for the last three years. It is only fitting that they end up together. They are equally as kind and loving, equally as generous and brave; they are the reason we fight. The love they share is one we all aspire to have, I know they would do whatever it took to keep the other safe, and for that I honor them. Ladies and Gentlemen, I give you Mr. and Mrs. Harry Potter." Hermione declared.

The room broke into applause.

Dobby, dressed in a muggle tuxedo, appeared and stood in the center of the room.

"Dinner is served!" He announced. At once, the tables filled with every possible meal any of the guests would want, they all began eating immediately.

“Harry, you didn’t hire a photographer.” Molly said, realizing she would have no pictures of her daughter’s wedding.

“Yes Molly you’re right, I didn’t.” Harry said sounding abashed. “But, I did charm my servants to be invisible, and take pictures throughout the ceremony.” Harry added with a smile.

“You did?” Molly said, scarcely believing it. “Show me.” She commanded.

Harry waived his hand at the room, ten house elves appeared. Eight were holding magical cameras, one had a muggle still camera, and one had a muggle video camera.

“Biddy, are any of the pictures ready yet?” Harry asked the nearest elf.

“Yes sir, they is.” The elf answered, and a stack of about a hundred pictures appeared in front of Harry.

“Here you go Molly, take a look.” Harry said, banishing the pictures over to Molly.

“Harry dear, you never cease to amaze me. Is there anything you haven’t thought of?” Molly asked, flipping through the magical pictures.

“There is, what am I going to do to keep my wife interested.” Harry answered, looking at Ginny.

“Trust me Harry, you’ll think of something.” Ginny said with a sly smile.

The pictures were passed around both tables, clearly the most sought after picture was the one of Ron tripping over his own feet while dancing. Biddy received six requests for copies of this one picture, even Dumbledore wanted an enlarged copy for his desk.

After dinner, Dobby announced the cake. It was without a doubt, the largest cake any of them had ever seen; it stood two meters tall, and had a circumference at the base of two meters.

“Who’s going to eat all that?” Molly asked, watching the cake float in.

"I know it's a lot, but I figured you'd all take plenty home." Harry said sheepishly.

They all received Hagrid sized pieces of cake and they sat down to gorge themselves. The cake was chocolate, with vanilla icing, and a Bavarian cream filling. Everyone finished their pieces; Ron had seconds and thirds. By the end of the night, the entire wedding party was stuffed with cake.

"It's getting late; I think the Potters want to be alone." Arthur declared, standing from the table.

"I agree." Molly said, standing also. The rest followed suit.

"I want to thank you all for sharing our special day, and I'll see you guys at school." Ginny said standing also.

They all said their goodbyes. Harry prepared Cindy's bag the evening before, so she left immediately with Arthur, Molly, Peggy and Annie. As soon as Harry and Ginny were alone, they retired to the library.

"Well Mrs. Potter, we're finally alone." Harry declared, sitting Ginny on his lap.

"Whatever did you have in mind, Mr. Potter?" Ginny asked with a longing look in her eyes.

"I was thinking of a nice hour long orgasm for my new wife." Harry said smiling.

"I like the sound of that, when did you plan on doing this?" Ginny asked playfully.

"Oh, I don't know, I kind of figured I would bring you to the point of no return and stop for about two or three days, and then maybe I'd finished." Harry answered playfully.

"Potter, you evil, evil man, would you really do that to me?" Ginny asked, nibbling on Harry's ear.

"No, but you don't know that." Harry said.

They began making love in the library, moved on to the Ball Room, which still looked like a forest, and finally ended in the indoor pool on one of the sub levels.

“Mr. Potter. I do believe you’re going to make a vixen out of me. I can’t get enough.” Ginny said with a satisfied look on her face.

“That’s just fine with me, I can’t get enough of you either.” Harry responded honestly.

They spent the next two days exploring each other’s bodies, it was Harry who convinced Ginny to do something other than make love. On the third day, Harry took Ginny down to the leeward side of the island, where both yachts and a smaller launch were docked.

“I was thinking of diving this morning.” Harry said, boarding the smallest of the three vessels.

“Diving like a muggle or wizard,” Ginny asked curiously.

“A wizard of course, I figure gillyweed would be the best solution.” Harry explained opening up a container of gillyweed on the deck of the boat.

They untied the boat and headed off for the Great Barrier Reef. The ride was only an hour, but was filled with various boaters waving and calling out to them.

“Do you know all these people?” Ginny asked.

“No, boaters are just friendly to each other.” Harry explained. “Oh, we’re almost there, you may want to get into your bathing suit.” Harry recommended.

By the time Harry had the boat anchored, Ginny emerged from below deck. Harry caught his breath at the sight. Ginny wore a rather revealing thong bikini, which made her look like a fully-grown woman. “She IS a fully grown woman.” Harry realized.

He handed her some gillyweed, took some himself, and placed extra in the pouch he wore around his waist. He quickly explained the



effects, as they waited for the gillyweed to kick in. Once it did, they dove off the boat.

Ginny felt amazing as she used her webbed hands and feet to propel her through the water. They slowly examined the abundant life of the reef. Fish of every shape and color lived there. Ginny had never felt more alive.

They remained underwater for the better part of the afternoon; they finally emerged shortly before dinnertime, and decided to eat at a local island restaurant, where docks were available for boats. Ginny put a sun dress over her bathing suit, and Harry just added a shirt.

"Welcome back, Mr. Potter." The manager said, shaking Harry's hand. "And is this Mrs. Potter?" He asked Ginny.

"He'd better hope so, or he's in trouble with someone." Ginny joked, shaking the man's hand.

"Your usual table," He asked.

"Thank you that would be fine." Harry answered, as the man lead them to a pier side table outside the confines of the restaurant.

"May I get you something from the bar?" He asked before leaving.

"Yes, two red wines please." Harry said.

"So, what do you think?" Harry asked Ginny.

"How do they know you?" Ginny asked.

"Well, its kind of a long story, the owner, Bill, was having financial trouble, so I helped him out by investing in this restaurant." Harry explained.

"You own this place?" Ginny asked.

"No, well not really, I'm just a silent partner. The staff doesn't know, they just think I'm a V.I.P." Harry said.

"Anything else you want to tell me?" Ginny asked smiling.

“No, if I tell you everything, then you’ll get bored with me.” Harry said smiling back.

They ate a pleasant dinner together. Harry and Ginny were quite content to just sit and talk. After a good two-hour conversation, Harry paid the bill, and they hopped back on the boat for home.

Hermione was sitting in Ron’s office at the Department. Hermione had been going over all the events of the summer with him. He seemed to be only half listening, so Hermione stopped talking.

“Are you listening to me?” Hermione asked.

“Oh, sorry Hermione, I just can’t get over all that has happened over the last few days.” Ron said distractedly.

“I know.” Hermione began, walking behind him, and rubbing his shoulders. “One minute Harry’s dead, and Ginny’s in the hospital, the next they’re married.” Hermione agreed.

“How can we keep all this quiet? The morale would increase a hundred percent if they knew Harry was alive.” Ron said.

“Harry has his plan, and to be honest, I think there’s more to it. I think he’s still keeping things from us.” Hermione confided.

“So do I, but we have to trust Harry, he has never let us down before.” Ron said. “So, who else wants to join us?” Ron asked, changing the subject.

“I think the question is who doesn’t. I have 267 requests to join the Dark Aurors, including almost half of the regular Aurors. We’re going to have to go through the applications, some might surprise you.” Hermione admitted.

“Like which?” Ron asked.

“Well, there’s Charlie, Bill and Percy.” Hermione started.

“Ooh, my older brothers working for me, I like it already. Go on.” Ron said smiling an evil grin.

"There's Snape." Hermione said quickly.

"Snape, yeah, I really want him working for me." Ron said excitedly.

"Moody." Hermione said smiling.

"Oh no, I don't want that weirdo around here at all." Ron said disgusted.

"The list is almost endless." Hermione added.

"Maybe we should start interviewing people." Ron recommended.

"Yes, but we have to look at what the applicants do now. We need people to patrol while we're at school. We can't take Snape or Charlie, they're both at Hogwarts with us, and Percy is going under cover already, we have to be careful." Hermione warned.

"Can't we just interview Snape then tell him no." Ron whined.

"No." Hermione said firmly.

"Hey I thought I was in charge." Ron said defensively.

"Not if you want to spend time together tonight." Hermione said warningly.

"Oh, yes ma'am." Ron said defeated.

"Sir," they heard Dorothy's voice. "Colonel Longbottom to see General Granger," she said.

"Send him in." Ron commanded.

"Hey guys." Neville began, closing the door behind him. "It's all over the wireless, Percy had a fight with the Minister, then he stunned a Dark Auror, bad publicity for us if you ask me, but Percy's gone." Neville said breathlessly.

"Wait a minute; was this a real fight, or the planned one?" Ron asked Neville.

"I don't know, I was thinking you could call your father and find out." Neville recommended.

"Good idea, I'll call him now." Ron said, walking over to the fireplace, and throwing in some floo powder.

"Minister Weasley." Ron said clearly.

"Ron." Arthur's said. "What can I do for you?" He asked.

"I heard about Percy, it's all over the wireless. What's the deal?" Ron asked, not wanting to be specific.

"I'm not sure, come to my office, we need to talk." Arthur commanded.

"On my way," Ron said, taking Hermione and Neville with him.

Arthur was standing next to Dumbledore and McGonagall when Ron, Hermione and Neville entered.

"What's up dad?" Ron asked, sitting down.

"It's Percy, I don't know if he went over for our side, or theirs." Arthur said honestly.

"What exactly happened Minister?" Hermione asked.

"Well, Percy wanted to join the Dark Aurors, I told him we needed him to spy for us, so he demanded to do it right there and then, I told him it was still too early, and he got upset, he stunned Cho, and ran off. The problem is, that was the original plan, so did he go over for us, or against us?" Arthur explained.

"Percy is a stickler for rules; did he stun Cho before he left, or after?" Neville asked.

"Well, let me see if I remember correctly. He said he wanted to do it now, oh, it was when I said no, he stunned her and ran." Arthur said.

"We may have a problem." Dumbledore said.

"I agree." Neville said.

“So do I.” Hermione added.

“Not me, I think he stuck to the plan perfectly.” Ron argued.

“Actually Ron, the plan was to run then stun Cho.” Hermione corrected him.

“I don’t see a difference.” McGonagall added.

“Well Professor, Percy would not have deviated from the prescribed plan, unless there was a problem, from what the Minister says, it happened almost to the letter, except for when he stunned Cho.” Hermione answered her.

“And what the argument was about.” Neville added.

“That’s right.” Hermione agreed. “They were supposed to argue about him getting an Assistant Minister or Deputy Minister position, not a Dark Auror position.” Hermione realized.

“I still don’t see a problem.” McGonagall said again.

“You see Minerva, Percy will do as he’s told, regardless of his surroundings, if he’s told to say light blue for example, he’ll say light blue, not blue, or powder blue, or any other variation, he’s methodical in his approach to everything, I have to agree with General Granger, and Colonel Longbottom.” Dumbledore explained.

“Maybe we should have told him about...” Arthur started saying.

“About that other information, Minister,” Hermione interjected, saving Arthur from a verbal mistake.

“Yes Hermione, exactly, that other information,” Arthur corrected himself.

“I don’t think that would have made any difference.” Ron said, still not believing Percy would cross.

“It would if he was scared. If he thought we couldn’t win.” Hermione said quietly.

“Arthur is it true.” Molly said, barging into the office.

“It is Molly dear, it is.” Arthur said.

“Was it planned?” Molly asked quickly.

“We’re not sure if it is Molly.” Arthur said softly.

“We think he might be scared.” Hermione said to Molly.

“Scared? Scared of what?” She asked.

“Scared he might be siding with the losing side.” Dumbledore added.

“Oh my, we should have told him about Harry.” Molly blurted out before anybody could stop her.

“Harry, Harry who,” McGonagall asked, picking up on what Molly said.

“Cat out of the bag, Professor,” Hermione asked.

“Indeed General.” He said to Hermione. “Minerva.” Dumbledore turned to McGonagall. “We’ve been keeping something from you.” Dumbledore said.

“Potter’s alive.” McGonagall said, obviously picking up on what had not been said.

“Yes Minerva.” Dumbledore said emotionlessly.

“Where is he now?” She asked angrily, as tears welled up in her eyes.

“On his honeymoon,” Arthur answered.

“Honeymoon, whom did he marry?” McGonagall asked, astounded by the revelation.

“Ginny.” Molly answered.

“Mr. Potter has married Miss Weasley?” She said, looking for clarification.

“Actually Professor, it’s not Miss Weasley anymore, it’s Mrs. Potter.” Hermione corrected her.

“This has got to be a joke.” McGonagall said, sitting down on the nearest chair.

“They were married three days ago Minerva, in a very beautiful ceremony on the beach, we have pictures if you’d like to see them.” Dumbledore said pleasantly.

“Perhaps later,” she answered distractedly.

“Back to the matter at hand,” Arthur interrupted. “What are we going to do about Percy?” He asked the group.

“Nothing,” Dumbledore answered. “We’ll take whatever information he gives us, with a grain of salt. We’ll ensure not to give him anything of value, anything that may hurt us. If he is truly on our side, we’ll know soon enough.” Dumbledore suggested.

“I’d like to see those pictures now.” McGonagall declared, crying freely.

“Of course, Minerva dear,” Molly said, grabbing a hand full of pictures from Arthur’s top drawer, and bringing them to her.

Molly and Minerva spent the rest of the afternoon talking about the wedding, while the rest discussed Percy.

“What a beautiful bride.” McGonagall exclaimed, looking at the picture of Ginny walking down the aisle. “Where is this castle?” She asked Molly.

“That’s their house, Potter Castle.” Hermione said, sitting down beside them.

“Potter has a castle? This is too much information.” McGonagall said.

“Yeah, Ron and I were saying the same thing earlier. I’m sure, as soon as their honeymoon is over, Harry will invite you over for dinner, now that you know I mean.” Hermione said.

“Why doesn’t he want anyone to know?” McGonagall asked.

Hermione went into the whole story about how Harry faked his death, how she realized it, and how they found him. McGonagall sat riveted to her seat listening to Hermione.

“Albus, what is Mrs. Potter going to do once she’s in school?” McGonagall asked the Headmaster.

“I have given my permission for her to commute back and forth between castles, in exchange for her teaching expertise.” Dumbledore explained.

“Teaching expertise?” She asked.

“Apparently she’s one of Harry’s star pupils, she can apparate through all anti-apparition barriers, I have asked her to instruct some of the teachers at Hogwarts, you inclusive.” Dumbledore explained.

Harry and Ginny were lying on the beach on the seventh day of their honeymoon. The weather had cooperated perfectly all week, and Ginny wondered if it was fate, or Harry’s elemental magic, either way, she was Happy.

“How about we just lay here for the rest of our lives,” Ginny suggested playfully.

“We could, you know.” Harry said smiling. “We have the money, we have the time, and we’re safer here than any other place on the planet.” He added.

“Yeah, but do you think everybody else would be jealous.” She asked, still playful.

“They’re jealous now; I married the most beautiful girl in the world.” Harry said, rolling over and kissing Ginny.

“This has to be a dream Harry, are you sure you brought me out of my coma?” She asked.

“Who cares, I’ve never been happier.” He said smiling.



Winky appeared out of the blue, right in front of them, "Mistress, you is having a call." Winky said.

"Thank you Winky." Ginny said apparating back to the castle, Harry followed.

Ginny walked into the library, where her father's head was floating in front of the fireplace.

"Daddy, how are you." Ginny said, excited to see her father.

"Fine Ginny, I just wanted to know if you and Harry would mind a little company tonight." Arthur asked.

"Of course not daddy, who's coming?" Ginny asked.

"Me and your mum, Cindy, Ron, Hermione, Annie, Peggy, Albus, Tonks, Draco, Neville, and um, Minerva, Fred, George, and Cho," Arthur said, adding the last few quickly.

"Oh daddy, Harry's going to be upset." Ginny said nervously.

"Your mother has let it slip several times this week, but only Minerva knows of your marriage, Fred, George, Bill, Charlie and Cho do not." Arthur clarified.

"What time are you coming?" Ginny asked.

"In about two hours, I have to round everybody up. Try to smooth things out with Harry; I don't want him hexing me, or his mother in law." Arthur said, not entirely kidding.

"Ok daddy, I'll see you soon." Ginny said, turning to find Harry.

Harry was fixing himself a sandwich in the kitchen; Biddy was arguing that he shouldn't lift a finger that the elves are there to serve him. Ginny giggled at the spectacle.

"So, who called?" Harry asked, tanking a bite out of his sandwich.

"My dad, he asked if we minded company." Ginny said happily.

"That's nice, make sure Biddy knows, she might curse any of them if they attempt to cook anything." Harry said, giving Biddy a sideways glance.

"There is one small catch." Ginny said evasively.

"What's that?" Harry asked, taking Ginny in a hug.

"He's bringing some of our friends and family." Ginny said, still being evasive.

"And," Harry asked, uncaringly.

"He's bringing mum, and Ron and Hermione and Cindy and Draco and Tonks and Neville and Albus, and, um, Fred-George-Bill-Charlie-Cho-and-McGonagall." Ginny added, saying the last six people in one word.

"Ok, so," Harry asked, still not seeing the problem.

"You're not upset?" Ginny asked.

"Upset that we're having a dinner party, why? How horny do you think I am?" Harry asked, looking at Ginny strangely.

"That's not what I meant!" Ginny said, slapping him on the arm. "I meant that Fred, George, Bill, Charlie, Cho and McGonagall know about you." She clarified.

"Who told them?" Harry asked pleasantly.

"My mum," Ginny answered.

"So, if mum feels they should know, who am I to argue?" Harry asked, taking another bite of his sandwich.

"I thought you told everyone not to talk about it." She said.

"I did, but again, if mum thinks they should know, then why should I be upset. Ginny, my love, you need to understand something about me, if anyone else, besides Arthur, Molly or Albus said anything, I would probably be upset. And if it were someone I absolutely did not

want to know, I'd probably be angry. But how can you think I could ever get upset with mum or dad. They are the only parents I've ever known, I love them." Harry explained, stroking Ginny's hair in the process.

Ginny began to cry softly. "How did I get so lucky? I love you Harry." She said, kissing him more deeply than ever before.

"Dobby, Winky," Harry called out, making the elves pop in. "Prepare the Dining Hall; we're having a dinner party in two hours." Harry commanded smiling.

"How many is coming sir?" Dobby asked.

"Fifteen," Harry answered, still smiling.

"Very good sir," Dobby answered, popping out with Winky.

"Do the others know about us?" Harry asked.

"Only McGonagall," Ginny said.

"Then I think this calls for a new gown, what do you think?" Harry asked.

"You sure know how to please a girl, Mr. Potter." Ginny said smiling.

"Only girls who deserve the best," Harry said, apparating them to the launch.

Harry took Ginny to the local boutique, she quickly picked out an evening dress, had it altered, and they returned with 30 minutes to spare. Ginny took over the master bath, so Harry grabbed one of his black Armani suits, and headed for the nearest guest bath.

Harry was ready in twenty minutes, but he knew Ginny would be a while longer so he went down to the library to await his guests.

The guests appeared just outside the front door, where Harry had instructed Arthur to use as an apparition and port key destination the week before.

The newcomers looked around in awe, even McGonagall, who had seen the wedding pictures, were amazed.

“Who lives here?” Fred asked.

“Not Harry?” George added.

“Actually guys, it’s called Potter Castle.” Ron said, slapping them both on the back.

Arthur urged them all forward to the door, and rang the bell. Dobby answered.

“Good evening Misses and Sirs, please be coming in.” Dobby said, opening the door wider.

The group walked into the main hall, Harry entered from the library to greet his guest. Arthur looked apprehensive.

“You’re here!” Harry exclaimed happily. “Welcome! Welcome!” Harry added, going along shaking the men’s hands, and hugging the women. Harry stopped when he reached Cindy. He bent down and looked into Cindy’s eyes. “I’ve missed you, young lady.” Harry said, hugging her tightly.

“I’ve missed you too, daddy.” Cindy said crying.

Harry picked Cindy up, and motioned the others to follow him to the library.

“This is some place you’ve got here Harry.” Charlie said, looking around.

“It’s not much, but its home.” Harry said imitating Ron from the first time Harry visited the Burrow.

“You’re not angry with me Harry, are you?” Molly asked nervously.

“Angry with you, Molly, you’re the only mother I have ever known, how could I ever be angry with you?” Harry said honestly.

Molly stood and hugged Harry, if it were possible, harder than he ever remembered.

“So dad,” Bill began. “Would you care to tell me why my sixteen year old sister is staying un-chaperoned?” Bill asked in a not so friendly kind of way.

“I think I should answer.” Ginny said, walking down the stairs from the second floor of the library looking absolutely stunning.

Ginny walked right up to Bill, and hugged him.

“You look incredible.” Bill said. “So why are you here?” Bill asked.

“Because I live here,” Ginny said plainly.

“You live here, with him.” Bill said angrily.

“I hope so; I wouldn’t want to commit adultery while we’re on our honeymoon.” Ginny said, sitting next to Harry.

“Honeymoon, Mum, dad, did you hear this!” Bill yelled.

“We are in the room dear.” Molly said pleasantly.

“And what are you going to do about it?” Bill asked, raising his voice an octave.

“We’re going to eat dinner I would assume, isn’t that what you do at a dinner party?” Molly said straight-faced.

“What?” Bill couldn’t believe his ears.

He paced around the room while the others watched; he stopped only when he saw an enlarged wedding photo depicting Harry, Ginny, Ron, Hermione, Arthur and Molly.

“You knew? You were there?” Bill still couldn’t believe it.

“Actually dear, we suggested it.” Molly said smiling.

“And what’s to stop me from killing Harry right now?” Bill said, still furious.

“The fact that Harry could kill us all, and not even work up a sweat,” Draco answered.

“Bill.” Harry said standing and walking over to him. “I’m in love with your sister; your parents can see this as plain as day. I want nothing but the best for her. Do not be angry with them, if you like, you can hate me all you want, I’ll take no offense. But don’t upset Ginny, my daughter might take it personally.” Harry said, sitting back down next to Ginny.

“And what do you mean by that?” He asked Harry, fury still in his eyes.

“He means that my darling granddaughter could lay you flat with a waive of her hand, he means you couldn’t even defeat a six year old.” Arthur said, now matching Bill’s anger.

“Can I say something?” Fred asked politely. The group quieted. “I couldn’t have been happier when I heard Harry was alive, he’s like a brother to us. But now, realizing he’s married to my sister, he is our brother. I congratulate you Harry, you found a great girl.” Fred finished, hugging Harry and Ginny in turn.

George stood, and followed Fred’s example. What surprised Bill the most was when Charlie, who hadn’t said a word, stood, and hugged Harry and Ginny.

“Bill.” Charlie began. “You’re being selfish. If Ginny is happy, the only thing you should be saying is congratulations, nothing else. I’ve always been the quieter one of the two of us, but I promise you if you don’t apologize to Ginny and Harry, I’m going to KNOCK YOUR TEETH IN!” Charlie said, yelling at the top of his lungs.

Bill, who had never heard Charlie raise his voice to anyone, froze in place. Bill reconsidered his position.

“You own this castle?” Bill asked Harry.

“Yes.” Harry answered.

“Well, as long as you can provide for my sister, I guess it’s all right.” Bill conceded, shaking Harry’s hand.

“Can Cindy really do what you and dad said?” Bill whispered in Harry’s ear.

“There are things she can do that your father doesn’t even know about.” Harry whispered back.

Winky popped in. “Dinner is served.” She announced.

“You have house elves working for you?” Bill asked, as they made their way to the Dining Hall.

“Yes.” Harry answered distractedly.

“How many,” Bill asked.

“Twelve.” Harry said.

“Twelve? How rich are you?” Bill asked surprised.

“Let’s just say neither your sister, nor her family, will want for anything the rest of their lives.” Harry said, looking right into Bill’s eyes.

“I’m sorry Harry. I’m just overprotective of Ginny, I helped raise her, you know. I was just so amazed that my parents would allow it.” Bill confided.

“Bill, if you only knew how much I love your sister, you would never doubt your parents again.” Harry said honestly.

“You sure know what to say Mr. Potter.” Ginny said, obviously overhearing the two talking.

They arrived at the Dining Hall a few moments later. After the initial awe of seeing the cavernous room, they all sat to eat. Ginny sat on Harry’s right, so Arthur took the liberty of sitting on Harry’s left.

After the obligatory small talk, Arthur turned serious, and engaged Harry in conversation.

"Harry, the reason we are here, is because we need your help." Arthur began, causing Harry to pay attention. "My family may be in danger; I want to move them in sooner than later." Arthur said.

"What's happened?" Harry asked.

"We fear Percy may have gone over to the other side." Arthur said bluntly.

"Didn't we agree on sending him in the first place?" Harry asked.

"Yes, but we hadn't settled on a time, he left arbitrarily, and actually hurt Cho, which is why she's here." Arthur explained.

"You are all, of course, welcome in my home, but how are we going to work this out?" Harry asked.

"Well, Fred and George put Lee Jordan in charge of their stores. Charlie is going to commute when school starts in two weeks. Cho is my bodyguard, so she goes to work with me. And Bill, well, that's probably why he's so angry; he may have to quit Gringotts." Arthur explained.

"Hey Bill, you got a second?" Harry yelled across the table.

"Yeah," Bill answered, taking a sip of wine.

Harry escorted him into the kitchen, where the house elves were busying themselves with the dishes.

"Bill, I wanted to ask you something, and when you were so mad at me, I didn't know if I should, but your dad says to ask anyway." Harry said.

"What is it?" Bill asked curiously.

"I have very extensive assets. Partnerships, ownerships, real estate, and large sums of gold, I wanted to know if you would be willing to be



my personal financial advisor. You're the only person I trust wholeheartedly who has a working knowledge of finance. I'd pay you whatever you thought was fair; I just need you full time. What do you say?" Harry asked, making it sound like he actually had it planned.

"I don't know Harry; I'm paid quite handsomely at Gringotts." Bill said unsurely.

"How much, if I may ask," Harry asked.

"Twenty five thousand Galleons per year," Bill said proudly.

"I'll pay you fifty." Harry said straight-faced.

"Excuse me? Did you say fifty thousand Galleons per year?" Bill asked.

"And free room and board. My castle has one hundred and fifty bedrooms, I'm sure one of them would suit your needs." Harry clarified.

"How long can you afford to pay me that much," Bill asked.

"Well if he could give me a ring worth millions, and my own quidditch supply store, probably for quite a while." Ron interrupted, entering the kitchen. "Harry, everyone is looking for you." Ron added.

"Just a minute," Harry said.

"Harry, did my baby brother just tell me he has a ring worth millions of galleons?" Bill asked.

"And a quidditch supply store." Ron added.

"Yes Bill, I gave him both those things." Harry said honestly.

"In that case, yes, I'll work for you." Bill said.

"Excellent, we'll draw up the papers in the morning, and I'll transfer your first year's salary as well." Harry said, walking back to the Dining Hall.

“Settled,” Harry said to Arthur, sitting back down.

“How,” Arthur asked.

“Bill now works for me, a financial advisor. I offered him twice what Gringotts pays.” Harry explained.

“Harry, I didn’t mean...” Arthur started saying.

“No Arthur, I had the intention of doing it anyway, I have too many assets I have no idea about, and the Black family estate was huge.” Harry lied.

“Ok, then it’s settled. When can we move in?” Arthur asked.

“I thought you already did.” Harry said smiling.

“No seriously Harry.” Arthur said.

“Seriously, you live here already, I moved all your personal belongings a moment ago.” Harry said to him.

“Ginny my love,” Harry got Ginny’s attention. “Do you mind if I invite these wonderful people to live with us, as of tonight?” Harry asked his wife.

“I love it, are you ordering new clothes, or are you going to let them get theirs?” Ginny asked loudly.

“I’ve taken care of it already, well, except for Fred, George, Bill, Charlie and Cho, but they’ll be taken care of by tomorrow evening.” Harry answered.

“How about you Minerva, you interested in staying?” Harry asked.

“I don’t think its necessary Harry, I’m quite happy at Hogwarts.” She said.

“But not as happy as you would be here. We have beaches, pools, year round beautiful weather, and pleasant company, won’t you reconsider?” Harry argued.

She was about to speak when Dumbledore whispered in her ear. "Perhaps I could give it a try Harry; I really need to work on my tan." McGonagall lied.

Harry knew Dumbledore convinced her, and judging by what Arthur said about Percy, it was Harry's interests Dumbledore had in mind. He probably didn't want anyone, outside himself, who knew Harry was alive, to be anywhere but Hogwarts, the Ministry or Potter Castle.

The remainder of the summer holiday went by like lightning; Harry and Ginny would spend their nights making love, and their days playing various games. Harry even thought Minerva was enjoying herself, she had even on occasions told jokes, and funny anecdotes about life as a Hogwarts teacher.

On the day before Ron, Hermione, Ginny, Neville and Draco had to return to Hogwarts, Harry planned a very special treat, quidditch. He charmed the island so that no one could see them, and conjured goal posts at either end of the island. It was the largest quidditch pitch they had ever played on.

Harry, Ginny, Cindy, Tonks, McGonagall, Ron and Hermione were on one team, and Draco, Fred, George, Bill, Charlie, Neville and Arthur were on the other. The game lasted all day, and most of the night, by the end, it was Draco's team who won, though Arthur argued that the other team let them win, which wasn't far from the truth.

Ron was packing all his new belongings; it was only when he pulled something out of his pocket that anyone noticed.

"Ron!" Molly cried. "You're head boy!" She exclaimed excitedly, rushing over and hugging Ron.

"Oh, yeah, it came with my Hogwarts letter." Ron said absentmindedly.

"And Hermione's head girl." McGonagall added.

"Oh, Hermione, that's so wonderful." Molly added, hugging Hermione too.

“When were you going to tell us?” Ginny asked slightly angry.

“With what was going on at the time, it slipped my mind.” Ron answered, and Hermione agreed.

Ginny hugged them both. “Let’s get some sleep, tomorrow starts your last year at Hogwarts.” Ginny said.

“Yes Mrs. Potter.” Ron joked.

## Chapter 5

The next morning Ron, Hermione, Ginny, Draco and Neville began bustling around the castle preparing to return to Hogwarts. Dumbledore set up port keys to take them to the Leaky Cauldron, and Harry arranged for his limousine to take them to platform 9  $\frac{3}{4}$ .

The group arrived just in time for the departure of the Hogwarts Express. Ron, Hermione, Ginny and Draco proceeded to the prefect's compartment, and Neville set off to find an available seat.

Neville considered himself lucky to find a compartment devoid of students, but, to his elation, his solitude did not last long.

"Hello Neville." Luna said in her singsong voice. "Alone today," she asked, sitting down dangerously close to Neville.

"Uh, yeah, Ron, Hermione and Ginny are in the prefect's compartment." Neville explained.

"You must miss Harry, he sat with you." She said sounding distracted.

"Oh, yeah, I miss him." Neville agreed.

"I miss him too, I like Harry." She said.

"Don't you mean, liked?" Neville asked.

"No, I still like him." Luna answered.

"I mean because he's dead." Neville said shortly, but Luna didn't pick up on it.

"He's not dead; the Quibbler says he's hiding. See?" Luna said, handing Neville a copy of her father's magazine.

The headline read; "Harry Potter, Biding His Time". Neville read the article completely. He was amazed how accurate the story actually was. It discussed their belief that he lured Voldemort there, that he

expected Voldemort to try and kill him and that he was hiding out in a castle.

“Luna, where did your father get this information?” Neville asked, reverting to his Dark Auror instincts.

“Everybody knows Harry’s alive.” She answered simply.

Neville stared at the pretty girl sitting next to him. She, though appearing quite loony, was actually very intelligent, and well informed.

“Luna?” Neville asked.

“Yes.” She responded.

“Do you, um, want to go to Hogsmeade sometime?” Neville asked nervously.

“I don’t think they’ll let us go to Hogsmeade this year.” Luna speculated.

“But if they do?” Neville pressed.

“I always go to Hogsmeade if they let us.” She said, not quite understanding what Neville was asking.

“No Luna, I mean, do you want to go to Hogsmeade with me?” Neville clarified.

“Oh, you like me; you want to be my boyfriend.” She answered almost disinterestedly.

“Yes Luna, I do like you, and I want to be your boyfriend.” Neville said impatiently.

“Ok.” Luna finally answered.

“Great!” Neville exclaimed, feeling better about himself.

Ron, Hermione and Ginny came in a few minutes later. Hermione was reprimanding Ron for his failure to speak up during the prefect’s meeting.

“But you’re head boy now Ron, you’re supposed to give speeches.” Hermione was saying.

“Hey guys.” Neville said, sounding guilty.

“Hey mate, something wrong?” Harry asked.

“No, nothing,” Neville said a little too quickly.

“Neville is my boyfriend now.” Luna declared.

“Oh, that’s great.” Hermione said, not sounding convincing.

Ron, on the other hand, who had heard Neville declare that he liked Luna, congratulated them both. So much so, that Hermione and Ginny gave him strange looks, but he ignored them.

When they all sat, Neville took the Quibbler from Luna, and held it up to the three newcomers.

“Look guys, apparently Harry’s alive.” Neville said with a knowing smile.

Hermione took the magazine from Neville, and began reading at lightning speed.

“This says Harry lured Voldemort to Hogwarts, and that he expected him to try and kill him. Oh, and it says Harry’s hiding out in a castle.” Hermione explained to Ron and Ginny.

“Blimey.” Ron said, taking the magazine.

“Why wasn’t I invited?” Luna asked, not looking up.

“To what,” Hermione asked.

“To Harry and Ginny’s wedding,” Luna asked, making them all look at Neville, who shook his head feverishly.

“What makes you think Ginny married Harry?” Neville asked, almost defensively.

"She's wearing a ring." Luna said obviously.

Now all eyes turned to Ginny, who was blushing scarlet. She had forgotten to remove her wedding band.

"Oh, this isn't mine; it's my mother's old ring," Ginny lied.

Luna finally looked up from what she was reading. The look on her face told them all that they couldn't lie to her, she knew.

"If you say so," she said calmly, returning to her book.

"Hey mate, why don't you help me patrol?" Ron suggested, trying to get Neville alone.

"Uh, sure Ron, ok." Neville said, picking up on his stare.

As soon as they left, Luna looked up at Ginny.

"Don't they know?" She asked knowingly.

"Know what?" Ginny ask, knowing full well what.

"That you married Harry, you did tell your parents, didn't you?" Luna asked.

"Luna, I did not marry Harry, he's dead." Ginny said angrily.

"Oh, Hermione doesn't know either." Luna said looking back down at her book.

Ron and Neville found the quietist spot they could find.

"You didn't tell her, did you?" Ron asked quickly.

"No, I swear it." Neville said as convincingly as he could.

"Then how does she know?" Ron asked.

"I don't know, but you read that article, it was completely accurate." Neville pointed out.



“Yeah, spooky it was.” Ron answered.

A group of second year Hufflepuffs stopped entirely too close for them to continue their conversation, so they went back to the compartment.

“Are you going to see Harry this year? Can I go with you?” Luna asked Neville.

Neville went to answer, but Ginny answered for him.

“Sure Luna, if any of us go see Harry, we’ll take you.” Ginny said, making Ron, Hermione and Neville look at her in shock, Ginny shrugged.

Luna went back to her book. Ginny motioned to Luna and smiled. They all realized she was just shutting Luna up.

The train pulled into Hogsmeade station earlier than usual; there was even a little daylight left. Ron, Hermione, Ginny, Neville and Luna took a carriage for themselves, and headed to Hogwarts. This, for Ron, Hermione and Neville, would be their last time, so they savored the trip.

Luna broke off from the group, giving Neville a small kiss, Neville was so unprepared, that he turned bright red, and froze in place.

“Come on mate, you’re making a fool of yourself.” Ron said, dragging Neville to the Gryffindor table.

The other Gryffindors stared at the four friends, as they talked animatedly, and laughed. Ron kept wondering why their housemates kept staring, until Hermione spoke up.

“They’re probably wondering why we’re laughing when they think Harry’s dead.” Hermione explained.

“Oh.” Ron said understanding.

“Are we supposed to mourn for the rest of our lives?” Ginny asked Hermione angrily, but quietly.

"I don't know, but they seem to think so." Hermione answered, motioning to a group of fourth years that were sneering at them.

Everyone quieted when the doors to the Great Hall opened. But instead of Professor McGonagall leading the first years in, it was Hagrid. Hagrid did not seem to be his typical jovial self; he seemed, to Hermione, to be distracted. He led them down to the front of the staff table, where the sorting hat waited atop its four-legged stool.

"Where's McGonagall?" Ron asked, thinking Hermione knew. But it wasn't Hermione who answered.

"Right behind you Mr. Weasley," McGonagall said, making everyone within earshot turn. "I need to see you, Mr. Longbottom, Miss Weasley, and Miss Granger." She told him.

"Yes Professor." Ron said standing.

The four followed McGonagall out of the Great Hall, and up to her office. When they entered she instructed them to sit.

"As you know, Professor Dumbledore asked you four to instruct the staff in Mr. Potter's strange approach to magic. I have taken the liberty of making a rotation schedule so that you won't fall behind in your studies." McGonagall explained, handing them each a piece of parchment. "As you can see, I have you each teaching one night per week, Monday through Thursday, the weekends I leave you to your own devices." McGonagall added.

"Four hours per day Professor? Isn't that a bit much for the teachers?" Hermione asked, thinking they might feel the brunt of their fatigue.

"I suspect the teachers might think the opposite Miss Granger, they are quite looking forward to the training." McGonagall said with a smile.

Ron started to squirm in his seat.

"Don't worry Mr. Weasley; there'll be plenty of food when you get back." McGonagall said angrily.

"Professor, I know that the Headmaster gave permission for me to commute back and forth to school, but does that mean I can spend the entire weekend at home?" Ginny asked hopefully.

"I have discussed that with the Headmaster, Miss Weasley." Ginny cringed at her name. "He feels that perhaps every other weekend would be better, that way students will be less likely to suspect." Professor McGonagall answered.

"That's fair." Ginny said, considering the alternative.

"I notice Miss, I mean, Mrs. Potter, that you don't like to be addressed as Miss Weasley anymore, is that wise?" McGonagall asked.

"I've been giving that a lot of thought, no one has to know when I married Harry; they could just consider me a widow. I think its ok for people to know, is that all right?" Ginny asked back.

"I'll ask the Headmaster, if he approves, I shall inform the staff." McGonagall answered.

"Well Professor, I think my boyfriend is just about ready to run out the door, if there's nothing else, may we head on back to the Great Hall?" Hermione asked, staring daggers at Ron.

"Of course Miss Granger, we wouldn't want Mr. Weasley to harm anybody running back to the Great Hall." McGonagall said tersely. "Oh and Mr. Weasley," she added.

"Yes Professor." Ron said, turning around.

"Don't forget, as the highest ranking Dark Auror, you're teaching Advanced Defense." McGonagall said smiling.

Ron stood rooted in place. He had not considered that before, he would be teaching.

"Um, thank you?" Ron said, turning to leave.

The four made their way back to the Great Hall. When they arrived, dinner had yet been served, as a matter of fact; the first years were still standing by the staff table.

“What’s going on?” Ron asked Dean Thomas as he sat.

“The sorting hat refuses to sort any of the first years. It sang a song about school unity, and said it refused to sort a single student until the evil that plagues us, is gone.” Dean said, quoting the sorting hat.

“What are they going to do?” Ginny asked Hermione.

Hermione never had a chance to answer, Dumbledore spoke first.

“Students, in light of the sorting hat’s new position, the teachers and I have come up with a solution, a fifth house. We will place the students into this new house, which we will call the Unsorted House, until the sorting hat decides to sort them properly. In the meantime, first years, take any available seat at any of the four tables, and we will begin eating.” Dumbledore said, as the food magically appeared on the tables.

“No sorting, has this ever happened?” Neville asked Hermione, knowing she read Hogwarts a History.

“No, there has always been a sorting ceremony; I wonder why it refuses to sort anyone else?” Hermione said, not really asking anyone.

When the feast was over, and the plates magically cleaned themselves, Dumbledore stood.

“Now for some start of term announcements, first, the forest is forbidden to all students except Dark Aurors, please do not forget, second, Hogsmeade visits will NOT be cancelled this year, but for security reasons, there will be no forewarning, check the bulletin boards every Saturday in case a weekend is planned. Third, if you were not here last year, I’m sure you’ve heard of the loss of our champion, Harry Potter, his legacy, the Dark Aurors, are here for your protection, please treat them with the respect they deserve, and in an emergency, I am giving the Commander and Chief full authority. If

any student is interested in learning from, or possibly applying for the Dark Aurors, Mrs. Virginia Potter will take your names.” Dumbledore paused to let his words sink in.

Everyone started pointing at, and whispering about Ginny. Since she couldn't very well smile, since they all thought Harry was dead, she just placed her head on the table and waited.

“Happy now,” Ron whispered in her ear.

“And lastly, thank you, and good night.” Dumbledore said, turning to leave.

In the Gryffindor common room that night, Ginny was being mobbed by questions about the wedding, when was the wedding, what kind of dress she wore, who was there, the questions were non stop. She had to stop and think at times, to keep her story straight. She passed around pictures of the ceremony depicting her and Harry, or them with Ron and Hermione, one with them and her parents, and finally one with her and Dumbledore dancing. By night's end, she regretted her decision to be called Mrs. Potter.

When Ginny managed to fight off the mob, she made her way to Ron, Hermione and Neville who were sitting by the fire.

“Don't say it.” She warned Ron.

“You carry pictures? Let me see them.” Hermione asked.

Hermione looked at the pictures carefully, there was nothing to give away when or where they were taken.

“Do you approve?” She asked snidely.

“I had to check Ginny; you know what's at stake.” Hermione said apologetically.

“Can I see that dress again?” Parvati asked, rushing over to them. Ginny handed her the picture of her and Harry. “Wow, it's so beautiful. Who designed it?” Parvati asked.

"I did." Ginny said proudly.

"You did? Can you design one for me?" Parvati asked excitedly.

"Sure, I'll see what I can do." Ginny told her.

"Thanks." Parvati said, handing the picture back, and walking over to Lavender Brown.

"When does the rotation start?" Neville asked Hermione.

"Tomorrow, you go first Neville." Hermione answered, looking at the schedule Professor McGonagall gave her.

"I better get some sleep then." Neville announced. "Good night everybody," he said heading for the stairs leading to the boy's dormitories.

"I'd better get to bed too." Ginny agreed, but she didn't head for the stairs, she headed for the portrait hole leading out.

As soon as Ginny was out the door and out of sight she apparated back to Potter Castle.

"You're home early." Harry greeted Ginny, kissing her deeply.

"Oh Harry, this is going to be so hard this year." Ginny said, hugging Harry tightly.

"What is?" Harry asked.

"Only seeing you part of the time," she answered sadly.

"At least we get to wake up together every morning." Harry pointed out.

"Yeah, I guess." Ginny said pausing to phrase her next sentence. "Harry, I think I've made a mistake. I told McGonagall that I wanted to be known as Mrs. Potter." Ginny said.

"So, you are Mrs. Potter." Harry agreed.

“But, now everybody keeps hounding me about when we were married, who was at the wedding, who made my dress. It’s hard to keep the lie straight, now I’m afraid I might give you away.” She said, sobbing slightly.

“Don’t worry yourself over it; if you screw up, then you screw up. I love you Ginny, no matter if you screw up my plan or not, I’ll always love you.” Harry said comfortingly.

Ginny smiled, hugging Harry again. “Oh, I forgot to tell you, the Quibbler has an article that tells the whole truth about May.” Ginny said urgently.

“I know I subscribe.” Harry said smiling.

“But how do they know?” Ginny asked confused.

“Because I told them,” Harry answered.

“You what,” Ginny asked disbelievingly.

“I told them. I’ve been talking with Mr. Lovegood for months; he had agreed to help me with my plan.” Harry explained.

“But how is telling everybody the truth going to help you with your plan?” Ginny asked, now totally confused.

“Because nobody believes the Quibbler, if a story about me being alive is reported there, then Voldemort, and his Death Eaters will believe I’m dead,” Harry said smiling.

“Oh. But now Luna knows you’re alive.” Ginny pointed out.

“So what if she does, I trust Luna, more than most Dark Aurors, if she believes I’m alive, that’s fine, if she wants to see me, that’s fine, and most importantly, let her say what she wants, that will only further my cause.” Harry explained.

Ginny smiled. “Because nobody believes Luna, now I get it.” Ginny declared, taking Harry in a strong embrace. “You are a genius, Mr. Potter.” She said kissing him.

"Of course I am I married you." Harry said, kissing back.

The next morning, after a long night of conversation and love making, Ginny dressed, spent breakfast with Cindy, and the Weasley's who were staying at her house, and apparated to Hogwarts. Winky had told Ginny the best place to apparate where she would definitely not be seen, a completely unused classroom two doors down from the Muggle Studies classroom.

"Everybody ready for a fun filled day of training," Harry asked pleasantly as he stood from the table.

"Not us, we have exploring to do." Fred said.

"An entire castle, as a matter of fact." George agreed, standing.

"Where do you think you're going?" Molly bellowed, entering the Dining Hall, after seeing her husband off.

"Exploring," Fred and George said together.

"Oh no you're not! You will be training with the rest. You still haven't passed your N.E.W.T.'s; you're working while you're here." Molly commanded.

"But mum, we want to explore, we can train later, Annie and Peggy have to catch up first." George argued.

"Besides, we're of age." Fred pointed out.

"You will NOT spend your time playing like children, while you're in this house you will work!" Molly exclaimed.

"Yes mum." Fred and George said together.

"Don't worry guys, you will enjoy yourselves." Harry added, turning towards the door.

Harry assembled the trainees, Cindy was the youngest, and Bill was the oldest. In between there was Annie, Peggy, Fred and George; Tonks and Cho would only be training after work.



Of all those assembled, the eldest girls; Annie and Peggy knew the least, and the youngest girl; Cindy, knew the most.

Harry instructed Bill, Fred and George first, he quickly showed them advanced apparition, and had them practice together. Harry then turned his attention to Annie and Peggy, they had purchased wands the day before, so Harry began with the basics first, Cindy just watched intently.

After several hours of intense training, Harry broke the class for lunch. They reassembled in the Dining Hall, and began talking about the training.

"That was wicked." George said, taking a sandwich from the platter.

"Outstanding." Fred agreed.

"I didn't know we could apparate like that, I actually chose my destination after I apparated." Bill was telling Molly.

"Soon you'll be able to apparate like Ginny, through anti-apparition barriers." Molly said to Bill.

"Isn't that dangerous, if wizards could do that, they could get into Gringotts, and rob any vault." Bill speculated.

"Then I recommend not teaching criminals." Harry said smiling.

"I understand, but the point is, we could." Bill argued.

"Yes Bill, we could. But I have ensured only those of the highest moral fiber be shown advanced apparition." Harry said confidently.

Bill took a sideways glance at his brothers Fred and George. Harry smiled.

"Mum, we learned how to levitate." Peggy said excitedly.

"That's wonderful dear." Molly praised.

"And how did you spend the morning?" Annie asked her mother.

“Oh, I was showing the house elves how to make my famous stew.” Molly said pleasantly.

“Oh, the elves are going to love you.” Fred said sarcastically.

After lunch, the entire group, except for Bill, went down to the beach, Harry decided all work and no play would cause a mutiny. Bill was to spend the afternoon going over Harry’s assets.

Bill began going through the mounds of contracts and deeds Harry has stored in his vault in the castle. Bill noticed partnerships and sole proprietorships that amounted to a huge fortune, but nothing could have prepared him for the Gryffindor fortune. Stashed inside four, two cubical meter trunks, were every type of precious jewel imaginable, Bill even saw crown jewels that he could not recognize. He began the insurmountable task of totaling Harry’s assets.

By five o’clock that evening, Bill emerged from the vault with a parchment three meters long. He entered the library where he expected Harry to be.

“Harry, I’ve finished totaling up your assets.” Bill said, still staring at the parchment.

“No Bill, you don’t have to say hello.” Ginny said angrily.

Bill looked up, at Ginny. “Oh, sorry sis, hello,” Bill said distractedly.

“So how much are we worth?” Harry asked, emphasizing the “we” part.

“Your family is worth, just over one billion Galleons, using 80 percent of today’s market value on precious stones.” Bill announced. “Three quarters of the billion is from Gryffindor, one quarter from the Blacks.” Bill added.

“Can you invest the money easily?” Harry asked.

“Oh yes, precious stones are quite easy to liquidate.” Bill explained.

“No, I mean the Black assets, I want to hold on to the precious stones, they’re equally useful in both wizard and muggle worlds.” Harry clarified.

“Well, there are a lot of businesses in Knockturn Alley, those would be difficult, but the real estate should be quite easy.” Bill answered.

“Good, get started tomorrow on liquidating the Black fortune, and reinvesting it. Keep a log of all profits made from those investments; I want you to take five percent of those profits for yourself every Christmas as a bonus, and the rest stockpile in Gringotts.” Harry commanded.

“Really, you want me to have five percent of the profits I earn you; Gringotts would have never done that. Are you doing this for you, or for me?” Bill asked.

“You don’t see the big picture, do you? You now have an incentive to increase profits, because it increases your yearly bonus, its just good business.” Harry answered.

“I’ll get started first thing.” Bill said standing.

“Oh, one last thing, can you inquire as to what it would take to buy the Chudley Cannons?” Harry asked quickly.

“Why them, they’re in last place.” Bill asked.

“Because they’re in last place, they should be the cheapest team to buy.” Harry pointed out.

“Good point, I’ll ask around.” Bill said leaving.

Ginny waited for Bill to leave. “We’re billionaires?” Ginny asked, knowing full well the answer.

“Apparently, I didn’t think we were worth that much, but, at least we can start investing.” Harry said smiling.

“That makes you the richest wizard in the world.” Ginny pointed out.

“And it makes you the richest witch in the world.” Harry pointed out to her.

“Yeah, it does, doesn’t it?” Ginny laughed.

“So, how was your first day back?” Harry asked Ginny during dinner.

“Dreadful, I had to take the O.W.L’s that I missed last year. And I’ll be taking them all week.” Ginny answered.

“Yeah, but you’ll do fine.” Harry encouraged her.

“Bill, how did you do today?” Arthur asked pleasantly.

Bill looked at Harry who nodded. “Well, I found out your daughter and son in law are the richest witch and wizard on the planet.” Bill answered matter-of-factly.

“Excuse me?” Fred asked.

“I estimated the Potter fortune at just over a billion Galleons. Bill announced. “And, it’s a low estimation, based on 80 percent of the current market value of precious stones and not counting the gold in the Gringotts vault.” Bill added.

“Who needs Weasley’s Wizard Wheezes, when we could live here like kings.” George piped in.

“You wanna bet?” Ginny asked, making them all laugh.

“So Harry, what are your plans when you defeat Voldemort?” Arthur asked, seriously believing Harry would defeat him.

“I’m not sure yet, I like my life here with Ginny and Cindy, but maybe we’ll do some traveling, maybe start a business together, or even a foundation. Something we could share.” Harry answered honestly.

“Maybe you’ll consider politics?” Molly asked, trying to coax Harry.

“I’m not much the politician Molly, I’m too opinionated.” Harry answered.

“We called it big mouthed.” Ginny joked.

“How about you, Cho, any plans after the defeat of Voldemort,” Bill asked.

“I was thinking of staying with the Dark Aurors, I like the job.” Cho said sheepishly.

“That’s wonderful dear; we need more witches in that Department.” Molly said, reassuringly.

“How about you Molly, the children are grown, any plans on teaching?” Harry asked. “I think you’d make a great teacher.” He added.

“You really think so, dear. I always liked teaching, but I wouldn’t know what to teach.” She said.

“How about Defense Against the Dark Arts, I could show you a few things.” Harry pointed out.

“I don’t know.” Molly said, pondering the suggestion.

“I think it’s a great idea.” Arthur agreed. “You should teach. You’ve been working around the house for too long. Harry’s right, the children are grown, and you’d make a fabulous teacher.” Arthur continued.

“If you think it would be all right?” Molly said to Arthur.

“I really do Molly, I really do.” Arthur said seriously.

“Then I’ll do it, I’ll talk to Dumbledore during the Christmas Holidays.” Molly resolved.

“Excellent.” Harry said.

“Um Harry, does that mean I’ll have my mother as a teacher next year?” Ginny asked tentatively.

“Not if she teaches Defense Against the Dark Arts, remember, you’re in Advanced Defense Against the Dark Arts.” Harry explained.

"But there will probably be no Advanced Defense next year; most of the higher ranking Dark Aurors are leaving this year." Ginny argued.

"Well then, maybe I'll teach it next year." Harry joked.

"And that would be better?" Ginny asked.

"Sure it would, you'd be sleeping with the teacher." George added.

Everyone laughed; even Bill found it amusing.

The rest of the week passed uneventfully, both school for Ginny, and the private instructions Harry was giving went smoothly. When Friday rolled around, Ginny could hardly bare her tests, the only thing she looked forward to was going home to Harry and Cindy.

Just after the last class, Ginny sought out Neville.

"Neville," she called out to him in the hallway.

"Oh, hi Ginny," Neville greeted her. "How were the O.W.L's?" Neville asked.

"A nightmare, I'm just so glad it's the weekend. Are you coming over this weekend?" She asked.

"Are you kidding? Miss out on Dobby and Winky's cooking, never." Neville said smiling.

"Where are you going Neville?" They heard a voice behind them.

"Oh, Luna, just an errand for Dumbledore," Neville lied.

"Are you going to see Harry?" She asked.

"Yes we are, would you like to come?" Ginny answered, making Neville stare.

"For dinner," she asked.

"For the whole weekend," Ginny clarified.

“Ok.” Luna answered distractedly.

“Won’t anybody miss you?” Neville asked concerned.

“No, they never notice me.” She said, leaving.

“Meet us here in fifteen minutes.” Ginny called after her.

“What are you doing? Harry’s going to be livid.” Neville said.

“I doubt it.” Ginny said simply.

Ginny made her way quickly to Dumbledore’s office, when she entered, the Headmaster greeted her in his typical pleasant manner.

“Mrs. Potter, have a seat.” He beckoned. “What can I do for you?”

“Well, Harry has already agreed, so I was wondering, can Luna visit the castle from time to time?” She asked quickly.

“Are you sure Harry doesn’t mind?” Dumbledore asked, with a knowing glance.

“Yes I’m sure. He thinks Luna telling everyone will only help his case, especially if she spouts out details.” Ginny explained.

“Most ingenious, I must say.” Dumbledore said laughing. “I guess there won’t be a problem.” He added.

“Can she come for the weekend?” Ginny added quickly.

“Ah, she’s already been invited, I still don’t see a problem, she has my permission.” Dumbledore agreed.

“Thank you sir,” Ginny said, leaving the office.

When the three were ready, half an hour later, Ginny and Neville took one of Luna’s arms each, and apparated to the front of Potter Castle. They walked up to the door, and rather than just walking in, Ginny rang the bell.

“Ginny dear, why are you ringing the bell?” Molly asked, and then saw Luna. “Oh, I see, come in.” She said warmly.

“Luna Lovegood, this is my mother, Molly Weasley.” Ginny introduced her.

“Hello, pleased to meet you.” She said in her singsong voice.

“Hello Luna.” Molly said, looking strangely at Luna.

“Luna’s my girlfriend.” Neville declared.

“How lovely dear.” She said smiling.

They all walked to the library where Harry was sitting behind his desk.

“Luna! Welcome to Potter Castle.” Harry said, walking up to her and giving her a small kiss.

“Hello Harry.” She said smiling.

“How’s your dad?” Harry asked.

“Fine, thank you for asking,” she answered, sitting down on one of the cushy arm chairs in the library.

“Luna wanted to spend the weekend, I didn’t think you minded.” Ginny said, hugging Harry.

“Certainly not, Luna is always welcome in my house.” Harry said pleasantly.

“Harry, you really don’t mind?” Neville whispered.

“No, of course not, I meant what I said, she’s always welcome.” Harry whispered back.

“Thank you Harry.” Luna said, obviously overhearing the whisper.

They sat and talked for a while, until dinner was served. The house was full of people again, and Harry was thrilled. Luna, for the first time Harry had ever seen, seemed almost talkative.



As the main course was about to come out, the castle bell rang.

“Who could that be?” Molly asked, standing.

She walked over to the door, when she answered it; she almost fell back in surprise.

“Severus? What are you doing here?” Molly asked, stepping aside to let him in.

“The headmaster believes I should come here for training.” Snape said in his usual tone.

“What kind of training?” Molly asked.

“There have been giants spotted around several wizarding communities in Europe; Dumbledore feels I should be trained to stop them. But as far as I know, one wizard can hardly handle one giant, let alone several.” Snape said, obviously not believing Dumbledore.

“That’s fine, have you eaten?” Molly asked pleasantly.

“I’m fine.” Snape said impatiently.

“Nonsense, come to the dinner table there’s plenty. We’re having prime rib tonight.” Molly offered.

“Where are we, a safe house?” Snape ignored Molly.

“The safest house,” Arthur said, apparently looking for Molly.

“Minister,” Snape greeted him.

“Severus.” Arthur answered back, matching his tone perfectly.

“Whose castle is this?” Snape asked.

“Well, come to the dinner table, and you’ll find out.” Molly answered shortly.

When Snape entered the Dining Hall, the first person he saw was Neville.

"Mr. Longbottom, outside school grounds, I guess that's fifty points from Gryffindor, and a week's detention." Snape said icily.

"We have permission." Ginny interrupted.

"Ah, Miss Weasley, another fifty points from Gryffindor." Snape said smiling.

"It's Mrs. Potter, Professor." Ginny corrected him.

"That would require a Mr. Potter." Snape argued.

"Then you should turn around." Ginny snapped.

Snape turned to find himself nose to nose with Harry.

"How nice to see you again Severus," Harry said as icily as Snape.

"Ah, Mr. Potter, I see the news of your death has been overrated." Snape snapped.

"You know me Severus, always looking for publicity." Harry said sarcastically.

"Indeed." Snape agreed.

"Please, sit, have something to eat. Welcome to Potter Castle." Harry said warmly.

"The Headmaster has asked me to receive training against giants, you wouldn't by chance know who he wanted me to receive training from, do you?" Snape asked knowingly.

"Giants, that would probably be me. I may have a spell or two to help you out there. By the end of the weekend you should be able to master them." Harry said smiling.

"Ah Severus, you arrived before me, welcome." Dumbledore said pleasantly. "I presume you know everybody here." He added.

"As well as I'd like." Snape said coldly.

"Severus please, have you met Annie and Peggy Weasley?" Harry asked, pointing at the Weasley girls.

Snape turned to them; his eyes fell on Peggy. "Have we met before?" Snape asked.

"You look familiar." Peggy responded.

"What about that boating thing you did, didn't you say you met someone who fit his description." Annie whispered in her ear.

"That's it!" She exclaimed. "I took a boating class with your uncle, you were there." Peggy explained.

Suddenly Snape remembered Peggy vividly in her small bikini and long, flowing red hair. "Oh yes, I remember now, nice to see you again." Snape said, actually sounding pleased.

Harry remembered that in one of the other timelines, Snape and Peggy had met the same way, and eventually married.

"A toast, to friends and family," Harry said standing. They all did the same.

After Cindy was put to bed, Harry used the opportunity to help love blossom, he decided to take them all on an evening boat ride. He led them all down to his marina and boarded the newest addition to his navy, the "Lady Molly, a forty meter sailing vessel with four staterooms, and two crew cabins."

When Molly saw the name, she began to cry.

"That is so sweet Harry, you named her after me." She sobbed, hugging Harry in her motherly fashion.

"Care to take command." Harry offered to Snape. He almost smiled.

"Prepare to cast off Mr. Potter." He commanded.

Harry smiled. "Aye sir," he said, releasing all the lines.

The Lady Molly carried her crew and passengers around the Whitsunday islands with ease. Snape kept barking out orders, and Harry and Peggy followed them without question. Snape was obviously an experienced sailor, but what surprised Snape, was that Harry was also.

They dropped anchor two kilometers east of Long Island. Potter Castle was like a beacon in the night, shining light in all directions from its four turrets. The passengers and crew mustered on the deck, and began talking amongst themselves. Harry noticed immediately that Snape and Peggy were missing.

Ginny snuggled up to Harry, as they sat under the stars. Bill and Cho seemed particularly close and friendly; Luna and Neville were whispering quietly, even Molly and Arthur were sitting dangerously close.

“Sure beats training.” Harry announced.

“It would if there were any available babes.” Fred argued.

“Yeah, where’s the single’s club.” George agreed.

“I’ll show you tomorrow.” Harry promised.

“But you’ll only SHOW them.” Ginny warned, everybody laughed.

“Of course, Ginny dear,” Harry said in his best Arthur Weasley voice.

“Take me too, I need some fun.” Tonks added.

“And me.” Annie agreed.

“Not me, too long in the tooth.” Dumbledore joked.

When the boat finally pulled into the marina, it was way passed one in the morning. Harry secured the boat, and they all made their way inside. Harry had Dobby show Luna an available room, Dumbledore went back to Hogwarts, and the rest all went to bed.

The next day was filled with training for Neville and Snape. Harry worked them hard, because he knew, at best; they would only come on weekends. By the time Saturday was over, Snape was able to use the Agriva Chocle spell, the choking spell for use against the giants, and Neville was able to use it once.

That evening, Harry escorted everyone to the yacht. He informed the twins, Annie, and Tonks that they would be dropped off at a local resort that had a great nightclub, and they would return by two in the morning. Harry ensured the club was all muggle, so none of them would be recognized.

Before reaching the island, they all gathered for dinner. Winky had prepared a small feast, and they ate happily on the yacht. By eight o'clock, the twins, Annie and Tonks had been dropped off, and the yacht was back at sea.

Harry, surprised them all, by taking them back to Long Island, and leading them to the beach. There were blankets and towels waiting for them when they arrived, and a large fire was burning in a makeshift pit.

They gathered around, Snape and Peggy went on their own private walk, while the others lay on the blankets.

"Do they look serious Arthur?" Molly asked nervously.

"I think they're just enjoying each others company." Arthur speculated.

"How can anyone enjoy Snape's company?" Ginny asked indignantly.

"Snape's not so bad, once you get used to him." Harry said.

"I'm sorry; did I just hear Harry Potter say that Snape's not bad?" Molly asked.

"He's not, it's just no one has ever taken the time to befriend him, not his schoolmates, not his workmates, not even his students. If you were treated as poorly, you'd be the same way." Harry explained.

"Oh, I know, I just didn't think you knew." Molly clarified.

"You're not worried about Peggy, are you mum?" Ginny asked.

"No dear, not really worried, just, concerned." Molly answered.

By the end of the night, or more accurately, by the morning, they all made their way to the castle. Cindy, who stayed behind under Dobby's care, was sound asleep in the library. Dobby, who must have spent the entire night chasing Cindy, was lying next to her. Harry laughed.

"Look Ginny, adventures in babysitting." Harry joked.

Sunday dawned bright and clear, Harry was already down in the training room when Neville and Snape arrived. He was no nonsense; he ran them through the Agriva Chocle spell until they were both on par then ran them through the killing spell, the Agriva Fiola spell. By the evening meal, both Snape and Neville would be able to handle themselves against any and all giants.

"How many times do you have to use the Chocle spell to disable a giant?" Snape asked Harry during dinner.

"One, actually one can disable many giants, but the Fiola spell is one giant at a time." Harry explained candidly.

"Excuse me Mr. Potter; did you say the Chocle spell can take out many giants?" Snape asked for clarification.

"Yeah, I've seen it disable ten giants at once, but I caution you, I was reluctant to teach it to anybody because I know wizards hate giants, and it would be entirely easy to wipe out the species if all wizards knew the spell. So if you don't mind, try to keep this one private." Harry said.

"That would indeed be wise Harry." Snape said respectfully.

Harry still couldn't get over Snape using his first name, it just wasn't natural.

"I must be leaving." Snape announced. "The Slytherins have probably destroyed their common room by now. He added standing.

"I'll walk you out." Peggy added.

Snape actually bid a farewell to all the people in the room, Harry had to stifle a laugh when he said goodbye to Luna, who just stared blankly at him.

"Nice guy." Peggy said, after she returned from walking Snape out.

"Yes he is." Harry agreed honestly.

"Sis, you're nuts, Snape is the most evil, single minded prat we have ever met." George declared.

"Totally nutters, Snape has ruined both our lives." Fred agreed.

"Well, I like him, he's sweet." Peggy said with conviction.

"Seriously like him?" Ginny asked. All eyes turned to Peggy.

"Um, yes," she answered blushing.

"I'm happy for you Peggy." Harry said standing and giving his sister in law a kiss on the cheek.

The rest of the evening was spent on Snape bashing by the twins, and Peggy and Harry defending him. Harry knew Peggy had strong feelings for Snape, so he made every attempt to compliment him throughout the meal.

"Thanks Harry." Peggy whispered to him as they were all going to bed.

"My pleasure, I'm just happy Severus is happy. He could use some happiness in his life, and nothing beats a Weasley girl." Harry said, making Peggy blush.

"Thanks again." She said, kissing him on the cheek.

## Chapter 6

The following week went by uneventfully; Ginny had resolved on Thursday to ask Dumbledore to allow Ron and Hermione to spend the weekend at the castle. While she was packing up the DA training room, she noticed Snape waiting patiently for her to finish.

"Can I help you, Professor?" Ginny asked politely.

"I was wondering if you would allow me to ask you a personal question, Miss, um, Mrs. Potter?" Snape asked, correcting himself quickly.

"Certainly Professor; anything." Ginny asked curiously.

"I was wondering if you thought Peggy would mind the pleasure of my company?" Snape asked tentatively.

"I think she'd love your company Professor." Ginny said smiling.

"Has she said anything? About me, that is." Snape asked.

"Quite a bit, she seems very taken with you, Professor." Ginny said honestly.

"Do you think your family would mind me seeing your sister?" Snape pressed on.

"Actually, I think they would love it, well except for maybe Fred and George, they aren't very fond of you sir." Ginny answered honestly.

"And I'm sure your husband wouldn't like it much either." Snape added.

"Actually, he was the one defending you against the twins the other night." Ginny corrected him.

"You can't be serious?" Snape said.

"Very serious, Harry is quite fond of you. If you don't mind me saying, I think he looks at you as a father figure." Ginny said honestly.



"Me? A father figure? I'm sure you're mistaken." Snape said with conviction.

"Let me prove it, come by for the weekend, I won't tell Harry you're coming, see how he reacts when he sees you." Ginny challenged.

"Alright, I accept, but make sure Peggy doesn't tell him either." Snape added.

"I will. Now, can I ask you a personal question?" Ginny asked tentatively.

Snape eyed her for a moment; he was trying to decide if he wanted to tell Ginny anything. He softened after a moment.

"Very well, ask your question." Snape finally said.

"Why did you always treat Harry so poorly. I know you saved his life in his first year and all, but I've heard such horror stories." Ginny asked.

"That's a difficult question. The first reason, and one I'm not proud of, is a childhood vendetta I had against Harry's father and godfather. I don't know if you know this, but Harry looks just like his father did when he was Harry's age. The second reason is that I didn't want to let his fame go to his head, all the other teachers would coddle him, I needed to keep him grounded. The third reason is the prophecy. I pushed Harry constantly to succeed, he needed to, he had, I mean he has to be the best. And the fourth and most selfish reason, I have to continue to show the Slytherins my hatred for the boy who lived. They have to think my loyalties lie with the Dark Lord, or my chances of undercover work will be gone." Snape explained.

Ginny stared into Snape's eyes, unblinking.

"I don't blame you sir, for the exception of the first reason, I think you made a wise decision." Ginny said smiling.

"Well Ginny, I need to be getting along, thank you for your time." Snape said leaving.

“Ah Severus, how was the class?” Dumbledore asked, pretending to be just entering.

“Just fine Headmaster, just fine.” Snape said, leaving the training room.

Dumbledore walked over to Ginny.

“He’s a good man.” Ginny declared, still staring at the closed door.

“Yes Ginny, a very good man.” Dumbledore agreed. “Now, what may I do for you?” Dumbledore asked.

“Professor, I was wondering if Ron and Hermione could come to visit this weekend? Ginny asked.

“Do you have an excuse for them to give their housemates?” Dumbledore asked.

“Yes, they should tell them they’re sneaking out to be alone in Hogsmeade for the weekend.” Ginny answered smiling devilishly.

“I’m not entirely sure the head boy and girl should make it known they’re breaking the rules.” Dumbledore said sternly.

“Maybe not, but it’s a story the whole house will keep quiet about.” Ginny argued.

“They can go, provided you come up with a better cover story.” Dumbledore said in a finite tone.

“Yes Professor, we’ll come up with a less delinquent story.” Ginny promised.

“Very well Mrs. Potter, than I’m off to other business.” Dumbledore said leaving.

“Thank you Professor.” Ginny called out as he left.

Ginny spent the rest of that day, and part of the following morning on a cover story for Ron and Hermione. She finally decided to tell her house mates that they were going on official Ministry business, most

believed the story without question, those that didn't, Ginny happily ignored.

When Ginny entered the Great Hall for breakfast, all eyes turned to her. She looked around nervously for a clue as to why everyone was staring, but there was no clue to be found. She walked over to the Gryffindor table and sat down next to Hermione.

"Why is everyone staring at me?" She asked Hermione nervously.

"Probably because of this," Hermione answered, handing Ginny the morning Prophet.

### Potter's Ghost Seen in Hogsmeade

Yesterday the ghost of "The Boy Who Lived, Harry Potter," was seen at a Death Eater attack. Potter's ghost foiled the Death Eater's plan to kill the family of the head of the Department for International Magical Cooperation, William Tims, the Tims family was asleep in their Hogsmeade home when four Death Eaters broke into the house, and ordered Tims to join them or die. When Mr. Tims refused, the Death Eater known as Martin Storm, raised his wand to kill Mr. Tims' youngest son, David, only to have the beam stop a mere inches from its intended victim. According to the Tims family, the ghost of Harry Potter appeared blocking the killing curse. With a wave of Potter's hand, three of the Death Eaters died and the fourth, Barnaby Mc Douglas, was spared, but given a warning for his master, "Tell your master, even in death I'll stop him."

"What is he doing?" Ginny whispered to Hermione.

"I was hoping you would know." Hermione answered.

They spent the rest of the day going through the motions of school. None of the group who knew Harry was alive had any desire to work or study, only to talk to Harry.

When the school day was finally over, Ginny, Ron, Hermione, Neville and Luna gathered in the DA war room for their instantaneous journey to the Castle Potter. They all joined hands, and apparated to the castle together.

When they arrived at the entrance hall of the castle, Molly appeared and welcomed them all in.

"Ron dear, how's school?" Molly asked her youngest son.

"Fine mum, where's Harry?" He asked her distractedly.

"He's in the training room with Annie, Peggy, Fred and George, why?" Molly asked concerned.

"This is why." Hermione answered, handing Molly a copy of the Daily Prophet.

"Oh, is that all? Harry told us about this on Tuesday, there's no reason to be concerned." Molly explained.

"Mum, do you think it's possible that my husband keep me just as informed as you?" Ginny asked angrily.

"There's no reason to be angry Ginny, it probably just slipped his mind. He is very busy you know." Molly said reassuringly.

"Hey everyone," Harry exclaimed as he entered the hall.

Hermione handed him the article.

"Yes I know, I encouraged the story," Harry said confused by the looks he was getting.

"Do you think next time you can tell me about your plans? I did NOT appreciate the looks I got because of this article." Ginny said angrily.

Harry now understood. "Oh, I'm sorry Ginny, it won't happen again." Harry assured her.

"It better not." She spat back before thundering up the stairs.

Harry looked at Molly. "Oops." He said apologetically.

"It's ok Harry dear, she'll get over it." Molly said, placing a hand on Harry's shoulder.

By six o'clock, the house was full again. The entire group was sitting in the library discussing the week's events. Fred was animatedly explaining the advanced apparition training he received when the front door bell rang.

"I'll get it!" Harry called out to the elves.

When Harry opened the door, he was surprised to see Snape standing there.

"Severus, come in please." Harry greeted him.

"You seem surprised to see me." Snape said calmly.

"I am; no one told me you were coming." Harry explained.

"Does it bother you?" Snape asked, displaying no emotion.

"Of course not, you're always welcome in my home. As a matter of fact, I'd prefer it if you would just apparate inside." Harry explained.

"Thank you Harry, I'll remember that." Snape said.

When Harry and Severus entered the library, Severus was greeted more warmly than he ever remembered in his life. Even Cindy ran up to him, and gave him a hug.

Snape was about to sit next to Peggy, when Dobby appeared and announced dinner.

They all made their way to the dining hall. The only ones missing from the group were Albus and Draco, Harry wondered why.

"Fred, George, are you ready to take your NEWTS?" Arthur asked.

"Just about, another couple of weeks should do it." Fred answered.

"Yeah, that sounds about right." George agreed.

"Anyone know why Albus and Draco aren't here?" Harry asked the group.

“Albus had work at Hogwarts.” Minerva answered.

“And Draco’s patrolling this weekend.” Severus added.

“Harry, I have a surprise for you.” Bill said loudly so that everyone heard him.

“Goody, I love surprises.” Harry answered sarcastically.

“I bought the Cannons as you requested.” Bill said smiling.

“Cannons Harry, why do you need cannons? Hermione asked what everyone was thinking.

“Not those kinds of cannons, the Chudley Cannons.” Bill clarified.

“You bought the Chudley Cannons!” Ron exclaimed.

“Apparently so,” Harry answered.

“I’m so jealous.” Ron admitted.

“Don’t be, I bought them as a gift for you.” Harry told him.

“You serious,” Ron asked.

“Yeah, but it’s a wedding gift. If you ever get married that is.” Harry added.

The room shook with laughter.

“I guess then you’ll be keeping the team forever.” Fred joked in between fits of laughter.

“Harry, you’re not serious, are you?” Arthur asked quietly.

“Yeah I am, I asked Bill to buy them so I could give them to Ron, he deserves to be happy.” Harry explained.

“And I presume the wedding gift part was to entice him to ask when the time comes.” Molly added, apparently overhearing Arthur and Harry.

“Exactly,” Harry said.

Suddenly a silvery dove entered Harry and Severus. They looked at each other, and quietly rose from the table.

Neville, Severus and I need your assistance.” Harry said calmly.

“What is it Harry?” Arthur asked.

“Giants in the forbidden forest,” Harry answered calmly.

“Do you need any help?” Ron asked standing.

“No, Severus and Neville can handle the giants, I’m just going to make an appearance, or at least my ghost is.” Harry added jokingly.

Harry nodded to Neville, who took Severus’ arm, and the three vanished.

When they arrived at the front door of Hogwarts, Dumbledore was waiting for them.

Severus, Neville, thank you for coming, where’s Harry?” Dumbledore asked.

“He’ll make an appearance shortly.” Snape said.

“Then onward to the forbidden forest,” Dumbledore added.

They walked for several minutes, when they came across a clearing. The clearing had makeshift tents, a huge roaring fire, and no less than twenty giants.

“Greetings,” Dumbledore called out to them.

The giants all turned at once. The largest one, obviously the alpha male, rose and walked towards them.

“Be gone little wizard, the Unas clan of the giants claim this forest and all its contents.” The giant bellowed.

"I'm sorry master giant, but this forest belongs to Hogwarts." Dumbledore said calmly.

The giants began to laugh.

"I have to ask you all to leave this area at once." Dumbledore added, causing the giants to laugh even harder.

"And if we don't," the giant challenged.

"Then I'll have to force you." Dumbledore answered.

"You force us," the giant asked condescendingly.

"Well, not me specifically, I'm too powerful, as is this other professor, this student will." Dumbledore answered, motioning to Neville, who began to smile at Dumbledore's strategy.

"A child, you will use a child?" The giant asked, disbelievingly.

"Well if one of the teachers attacks you, you might be accidentally killed." Dumbledore lied.

Another giant started whispering to the first.

"No! It's a trick!" The giant bellowed.

"Neville," Dumbledore said calmly.

The giants turned to look at Neville. He raised his wand, and recited the Chocle spell. Immediately a circular puff of smoke rose out of his wand and encircled the twenty giants. The screaming could be heard all the way back in the dungeons of Hogwarts.

Dumbledore signaled to Neville, and he stopped.

The giants stared dumbfounded at Neville, who beamed with pride.

"Now, will you leave the area?" Dumbledore asked again.

"You must all be powerful; the hooded wizard has lied to us." The giant announced, obviously referring to Voldemort.



“Then perhaps you should ally yourselves with the Ministry instead.” Dumbledore said.

“The Ministry hates giants, they want to kill us.” The giant argued.

“No, the Ministry does not hate you, only the old Minister. The new Minister wants giants and wizards to be friends.” Dumbledore explained.

“I do not believe you.” The giant roared.

“Then maybe you should hear it straight from the Minister.” Arthur said, emerging from behind Dumbledore, Snape and Neville with Hagrid and Grawp at his side.

“Who are you?” The giant asked.

“I am Arthur Weasley, the Minister of Magic.” Arthur answered regally.

“You are the Minister?” The giant asked turning and whispering to another giant.

“I am, and I’m willing to negotiate.” Arthur answered.

“What do you offer?” The giant asked.

“In return for your allegiance, I’m willing to offer a ten thousand square acre parcel of land that you and your clan that you can call your own, completely undisturbed by wizard kind. I also offer you a vote on the council of magical beings and my assurance that giants will be treated with the respect they deserve.” Arthur explained.

The giant turned to the group and began speaking in an unknown language.

After a few moments, the giant turned back to the group.

“The Unas clan is more than three hundred strong.” The giant stated.

“Then a twenty thousand acre parcel.” Arthur negotiated.

“The Unas clan agrees to the Minister’s terms.” The giant announced.

“Excellent!” Arthur exclaimed. “Then if you have no objections, I think Hagrid and Neville will work out the details.” Arthur said, turning to Neville and handing him a pile of parchments. “Make sure they sign them, and apparate them to their new home, the location is on the first parchment.” Arthur instructed Neville. “What do you think Albus, Order of Merlin Third Class for Mr. Longbottom?” Arthur asked, turning to Dumbledore.

“I completely agree.” Dumbledore answered.

Late that night after Neville had finished with the formalities and the transporting the giants to their new home, he and Hagrid returned to the Headmasters office. When they knocked, Dumbledore greeted them at the door.

Neville, Hagrid, did all go well?” Dumbledore asked.

“Perfect Professor, absolutely perfect,” Neville answered.

“Neville, I think our gamekeeper needs to visit the Minister’s quarters with you, do you agree?” Dumbledore asked Neville with a sly grin.

“Yes professor, I really think he does.” Neville answered and turned to Hagrid. “Hagrid, would you like to spend the rest of the weekend with us?” Neville asked him.

“Er, I don’ know. I’ve got a lot to do.” Hagrid answered.

“I guarantee you’ll enjoy the trip.” Dumbledore added.

“Ok, I’ll go.” Hagrid said disbelievingly.

Neville touched Hagrid’s arm, and they instantly appeared in front of Potter Castle.

“Where are we?” Hagrid asked.

“You’ll see,” Neville answered with a smile, and rang the bell.

“Neville, why are you ringing the bell?” Molly asked while opening the door. “Oh, that’s why. Come in.” She instructed them.

“Where are we?” Hagrid asked Molly.

“Step this way, and you’ll know.” Molly said, motioning to the library.

“Hagrid,” Hermione yelled.

“Hermione, what are ya doin’ here?” Hagrid asked.

“This is my house.” Harry said standing.

“Harry? It can’t be; yer dead.” Hagrid said confused.

“I was dead, I’m better now.” Harry said hugging Hagrid.

“Harry, you’re alive!” Hagrid bellowed.

“Not if you keep smothering him like that.” Fred said jokingly.

“Hagrid, welcome to Potter Castle,” Harry said, and then turned to Ron. “Can you get him up to speed please?” Harry asked Ron who immediately took Hagrid aside and began explaining it to him.

“Neville, come here please.” Arthur instructed Neville.

“Yes Minister.” Neville responded, walking up to the Minister.

Arthur handed him a rolled up parchment, and took a pin out of his pocket. “For the exemplary work in allying the giants and the Ministry, it is my honor to award you the Order of Merlin, Third Class.” Arthur announced, pinning Neville with the decoration. The room applauded.

“Congratulations mate.” Harry said, hugging Neville and stepping aside to allow everyone to congratulate him as well.

“Wow, Grams will be so proud.” Neville said aloud.

They all talked well into the night. Harry arranged for Hagrid to have the second largest bedroom in the castle, he wanted him to feel like a king.

The next morning, Harry took Cindy by the hand, and sought out Hagrid.

“Cindy, I’d like you to meet Hagrid, one of my very best friends.” Harry said, introducing the two.

“He’s so big.” Cindy said simply.

“He’s a half giant.” Harry explained.

“Pleased to meet ya,” Hagrid said nervously. It was apparent that Hagrid really wanted Cindy to like him.

“Do you want to go play with me?” Cindy asked.

“Sure I do,” Hagrid responded.

Cindy touched Hagrid’s arm, and they vanished.

“Harry, your daughter can apparate?” Severus asked him.

“Yeah, she’s my star pupil.” Harry responded proudly.

“You must be proud.” Severus said.

“You have no idea.” Harry answered smiling.

Harry, Ginny, Ron, Hermione, Neville, Severus and Arthur met in secret shortly before lunch.

Harry, I’ve received a message from Percy.” They all snapped to attention. “He claims that the Death Eaters are planning to attack the homes of several Ministry officials, he lists the names, dates and times.” Arthur told him.

“How did he get it to you?” Harry asked.

“He personally handed it to one of my assistants outside the Ministry.” Arthur answered.

“When,” Harry asked.

“About five o’clock this morning.” Arthur answered.

"Do your assistants typically arrive at that time on Saturday's?" Harry continued.

"Yes, as a matter of fact, they do, why, is that a problem?" Arthur asked concernedly.

"Quite the contrary, it sounds like he's on our side. He went out of his way to secretly get you a message without contacting you directly, and he did it with cunning and intrepidity." Harry answered.

"Are you sure you're sixteen years old?" Arthur asked him.

"Yes, but only chronologically, I have the life experience of a ninety year old." Harry answered.

"How is that possible?" Arthur asked.

"I'll explain it to you later daddy." Ginny interrupted.

"May I see the list?" Harry asked Arthur, who handed it to him immediately.

Harry read the list carefully then handed it to Ron. After it was passed around, Harry opened his desk, pulled out a piece of parchment, and turned to them.

"Here is a security spell of my own making. Cast the spell at the homes of all these people, we will be informed the moment something happens." Harry explained.

"We," Hermione questioned.

"We, that is to say those of us in this room, I want a Dark Auror present at every attack, I want the public to see them performing their assigned duties. But more importantly, I want Riddle to see how far the arm of Hogwarts reaches." Harry said authoritatively.

"Still trying to scare Voldemort," Ginny asked him.

“Not just scare and not just Voldemort. I want every Death Eater to see that not only will I always be there, but so will the Dark Aurors.” Harry answered.

“But I’m not a Dark Auror.” Severus pointed out.

“Of course you are.” Harry said without a hint of doubt.

“Actually Harry, we didn’t think he would want to take orders from his students, so we never made him an official Dark Auror.” Hermione said.

“You didn’t, but I did, while I was still the CNC. Check the official records they will confirm what I am saying.” Harry said without any emotions.

“Very sneaky Harry, but why hasn’t Severus been paid.” Arthur asked, deducing that if Severus didn’t know he was a Dark Auror, he certainly wasn’t getting paid.

“His pay goes straight into an account in Gringotts bank of Hogsmeade.” Harry answered.

“Lunch is served.” Dobby announced.

“Good, I’m hungry.” Ron declared.

“You’re always hungry.” Hermione retorted.

The week following the meeting, there were twenty two attacks on wizards and their families and forty six attacks on muggles. The Dark Aurors managed to intervene on twenty of the twenty two wizard attacks on wizards but only thirty of the forty six attacks on muggles. It was becoming obvious to the DME that Voldemort was recruiting wizards faster than he ever had before, and the Dark Aurors were arresting or killing them just as fast.

Hogwarts was safer than it had ever been. Between the Professors, the giants and the Dark Aurors patrolling the grounds, no Death Eater would have the slightest chance of entering the grounds.

The students were going about their daily routine without the slightest care for what was going on in the outside world.

Dumbledore decided to make the following weekend a Hogsmeade weekend. He knew with all the added security, aided by the fact that Tonks did not want the three highest ranking members of the DME to walk Hogsmeade unprotected. She had assigned fifty Dark Aurors that did not attend Hogwarts to supplement the ones that did. She ensured that Ron, Hermione and Neville did not know.

Immediately after breakfast on Saturday, the Hogwarts students, third year and up, began to make their way into town. Ron ordered Dark Aurors to the front, middle and back of the mass of students traversing the school grounds.

Ron, Hermione, Ginny, Neville and Luna were sitting in the Three Broomsticks by lunch that day. Since Ginny now owned the pub, she ensured that the five friends were well fed and well cared for. After lunch, the five left the pub for Fred and George's new shop at the other end of town. When they arrived, they were stunned to find that it was packed with students from wall to wall. Lee Jordan seemed to be on the brink of a nervous breakdown from all the people.

"Lee," Ron called out to him.

"Ron," Lee called back, as he tried to make his way to them.

"Ron, Ginny, when are those brothers of yours coming back, this has been a nightmare." Lee explained.

"Not for a while, they have more important work to do." Ginny answered.

"Ginny, is it true what I heard, you married Harry?" Lee asked, finally getting the opportunity to ask.

"Yes I did." She answered simply.

"I'm so sorry for your loss." Lee said sympathetically.

"Thank you Lee, but none of us has time to mourn, we have evil to fight." Ginny said frowning.

"Speaking of which, Ron, Hermione, would you two mind looking at my application for the DME?" He asked, handing them a piece of parchment.

"You want to join us?" Ron asked.

"Everybody wants to join you, the DME's pay quite handsomely." Lee said with a sly grin. "A hell of a lot more than Fred and George, that's for sure." He added, making them laugh.

"Lee, the training involved is very intense, are you sure you want to do this?" Hermione asked.

"Yes, definitely," he answered.

"Ron, you're the CNC, I recommend Lee Jordan for the position of officer in the Dark Aurors, what say you?" Hermione asked in her most businesslike manner.

"Ginny, would you escort Mr. Jordan to the supply room, and then to the training castle?" Ron asked his sister.

"Yes Commander." Ginny answered with a knowing look.

"Where's the training castle?" Lee asked as Ginny lead him to the supply room.

"You'll see," Ginny vaguely answered.

Ginny touched his arm and they were immediately standing in the entrance hall of Potter Castle.

"Dobby," Ginny called.

"Yes mistress." Dobby said, popping in.

"Is my mother home?" She asked politely.

"Yes mistress, she's in the dining hall." Dobby answered.



“Thank you Dobby, that’ll be all.” Ginny said, directing Lee towards the dining hall.

“Mistress? Do you own this castle?” Lee asked astounded.

‘Actually, yes,” Ginny answered.

When they entered the dining hall, Molly, Fred, George, Peggy and Annie were sitting at the dining table animatedly discussing the morning’s training; Ginny led Lee to the far end of the hall where they were eating.

“Hi mum,” Ginny exclaimed, hugging her mother hello.

“Lee, what are you doing here?” George asked.

“I hope you guys don’t mind, but I put in for the DME.” Lee answered.

“You’re quitting?” Fred asked.

“I hope you guys don’t get upset but, yes I am.” Lee said, drawing himself to his full height.

“Mind, do we mind?” Fred exclaimed and then turned to George. “Do we mind?” He asked.

“No, why should we, the DME pay way more than we do.” George answered with a laugh.

The twins stood and hugged their friend hello. They went around introducing Lee to their elder sisters, and sat him down between them.

“Is this really Ginny’s castle?” Lee asked Molly.

“Yes dear, it is.” Molly answered, filling Lee’s plate with sandwiches.

“How did she get it?” He continued.

“Harry bought it dear.” Molly said smiling.

“Hello.” A little voice rang out from behind Molly.

"Cindy dear, this is Lee Jordan, Fred and George's friend from work." Molly said, kissing Cindy on top of the head.

"Hello Lee, my name is Cindy." Cindy introduced herself as she shook Lee's hand.

"And who is this?" Lee asked the twins.

"This is Harry's daughter." Fred said matter-of-factly.

"Harry had a daughter?" He asked astounded.

"He adopted her." Molly clarified.

"Wow, I have been out of touch." Lee declared.

"More than you know mate." George said knowingly.

"What does that mean?" Lee asked.

"It means Mr. Jordan, that there are things you may or may not be privy to." Snape's voice came from behind Lee.

"Professor Snape, Minister Weasley, hello," Lee said, jumping to attention.

"Hello Lee." Arthur greeted him warmly.

"Jordan." Was Snape's only greeting, as he walked over to Peggy who quickly leapt into his arms and kissed him.

Lee Jordan just stood staring at the site of his former Professor actually kissing a woman and a Weasley none the less.

"Close your mouth Lee, you're attracting flies." Molly said causing the room to burst into laughter.

"Hello Lee." Bill greeted him as warmly as his father.

"Bill, what are you doing here?" Lee asked.

"I live here, I manage the Potter fortune.

“Potter fortune, there’s a Potter fortune?” He asked even more astounded.

“The largest that I’ve ever heard of,” Bill answered sitting down to lunch.

“Harry was THAT rich?” He added.

“No, Harry IS that rich.” Harry added, walking into the dining hall.

Lee had no words, he sat there staring at Harry unable to speak or turn away.

“No Lee, I’m not a ghost.” Harry clarified.

“You’re alive.” Lee stated the obvious.

“That would explain the breathing.” Fred said sarcastically.

“My wife tells me you were accepted in the DME.” Harry said to Lee.

“Um, yeah, Ron approved me earlier today, but how did you hear, Ginny’s been with me?” Lee asked.

“Don’t concern yourself, Lee, suffice it to say, she told me. Now, I presume he sent you here for some remedial training,” Harry stated.

“He did, he called this the training castle.” Lee explained.

“There’s a name I hadn’t thought of Arthur, the training castle.” Harry said to the Minister jokingly.

“Good code name.” Arthur answered with a mouthful of soup.

“Where do you live Lee?” Harry asked.

“At the store,” Lee answered simply.

“Not any more, you’ll have one of the bedrooms here at the castle. Complete run of the place and all the food you can eat.” Harry explained happily.

“Seriously Harry, I can live here?” Lee asked.

“It’ll be just like old times.” George declared.

“Oh no it won’t.” Molly corrected him, causing the room to laugh again.

Harry stood so fast the entire table shook. He had a look of desperation on his face, he turned and apparated out of the room. Ginny followed suit.

Back at Weasley’s Wizard Wheezes, Ginny had just joined the others who were busy buying as much as they could carry. Outside there was a loud explosion. The other customers stood rooted to the floor, but the five members of the DME ran out to investigate.

Outside the streets were crawling with Death Eaters and Dementors. If it were possible to count, Ron would have known there were one hundred and sixty Death Eaters and two hundred and twelve Dementors.

Ron began barking out orders to the other four. He, Hermione and Ginny were to conjure patronuses and Luna and Neville were to fight off the Death Eaters.

After only five minutes of fighting, the five friends were being overrun. Death Eaters and Dementors were coming at them faster than they could defend. It was Hermione who first heard the rush of Dark Aurors. No less than fifty Dark Aurors were attacking the Death Eaters and Dementors from both sides of the wide street.

Even with the added assistance, the enemy was getting dangerously close to the five friends. Almost a hundred Death Eaters and half the Dementors remained, but they were approaching such that the other Dark Aurors would never get there in time.

“Hermione, any ideas,” Ron asked as a Death Eater was thrown back dead by a blast from Neville’s wand.

“We can’t fall back inside there are too many people who could be hurt.” She said, conjuring another patronus.

“I know what we can’t do, tell me what we can.” Ron snapped.

“I’m here Ron, don’t worry.” Ron heard Harry’s voice in his head.

Harry semi-materialized in front of his five friends, the Death Eaters stopped for a moment as they stared at Harry.

“You should never have threatened my wife!” Harry bellowed as loud as he could.

Then with a wave of his hand, all the Dementors fell to the floor dead. With a wave of his other hand, the Death Eaters were disarmed. Harry turned to his friends, making sure the patrons in Weasley’s Wizard Wheezes could see and hear him.

“Even in death I shall still protect you.” He exclaimed and vanished, leaving the problem of cleaning up to the Dark Aurors.

The five friends and the Dark Aurors began binding all the remaining Death Eaters, and whisking them away to the Ministry. When the streets were safe again, Ron ordered the Dark Aurors that remained to gather up and escort the Hogwarts students back to the castle. When he turned around, flash bulbs were going off from all directions.

He, his four friends and the other Dark Aurors were heroes. They had managed to fend off the largest attack Voldemort had ever ordered. When the final numbers were in, one hundred and ten Death Eaters were killed and fifty were captured. One hundred and ten Dementors were killed and one hundred and two fled. It was the single greatest victory for the DME, and Ron got all the publicity.

The Daily Prophet had a ten page account of the event the following day, featuring Ron’s picture on the front page and a caption that read; “Ronald Weasley, Our New Hero.” Witch Weekly stopped the presses and placed Ron on its cover as well, their caption read; “Ron Weasley – The Bravest Man Alive.” Ron was in his glory.

Dinner the next evening found the residents of Potter Castle along with the senior members of the DME sitting at the dining hall in Potter Castle. They were all in good spirits after the events of the day before, as well as the articles that appeared in the respective periodicals.

"Thanks Harry, we were starting to get nervous." Ron whispered to Harry.

"Anytime mate, anytime." Harry answered.

"So Molly, how does it feel to have a son on the cover of Witch Weekly?" Harry asked playfully.

"Not just a son, but my Head Boy son." Molly answered kissing Ron on the cheek.

They spent the better part of the evening meal discussing all that had transpired the day before. Neither Harry nor Ron could stop smiling. It was a victory for the DME but more importantly, it was a victory for the side of good.

When the door bell rang, Harry decided to answer it himself. Nothing could have prepared him for the shock he received when he opened the door.

"Michael?" Was all he could say.

## Chapter 7

Harry escorted Michael to the library of Potter Castle. Dobby appeared with a tray of tea and crumpets of his own accord, Harry was pleased.

“So Harry, I hear you’re still dead.” Michael said jokingly.

“So did I, I can’t imagine who would have started such a vicious rumor.” Harry said smiling.

“I presume you’re still trying to draw Riddle out of hiding.” Michael surmised.

“My plan exactly,” Harry stated.

“And I also presume the ghost sightings are designed to continue to make him nervous.” Michael continued.

“Something like that.” Harry said.

“Good plan but I expect the wizarding community at large is still saddened by the loss.” Michael deduced.

“They are but there’s nothing I can do about that, they’ll just have to get over it.” Harry said coldly.

Michael nodded taking a sip of his tea.

“The Black family fortune I presume.” Michael said motioning to the castle.

“And some of the Gryffindor fortune,” Harry clarified.

“You used the Gryffindor fortune? Did he tell you about it, or did you use the knowledge of one of the timelines?” Michael asked exasperatedly.

“I used my memories, but I’m sure he would have told me in this life as well. Hell, only Godric’s chosen heir can access it.” Harry explained.

“But you could have at least waited until he told you.” Michael said.

“I had very specific plans that needed to be put in motion.” Harry continued defending his decision.

“How have you been otherwise?” Michael asked taking another sip of tea.

“I miss Sirius a lot; I wish he could be here for the final battle.” Harry said introspectively.

“That’s the true problem with humanity it’s such a finite existence. How did Sirius die?” Michael asked, hoping to help Harry by letting him mourn.

“I never told you the story?” Michael nodded. “Well, towards the end of my fifth year I was lured out of Hogwarts to the Ministry by Riddle, he used our connection to show me things that weren’t true. To make a long story short, Sirius came to save me, and went through an archway that kills.” Harry answered.

“An archway that kills,” Michael asked.

“Yeah, apparently it’s an ancient artifact that if you step through it you die.” Harry clarified.

“I’m sorry Harry, did you say an ancient artifact that if you step through it you die?” Michael asked disbelievingly.

“Yeah, why,” Harry now asked.

“I have been around a long time Harry, I have never heard of an archway that kills.” Michael explained, and then got a look of understanding. “Did you hear any voices from the archway itself, and did it have writing on both sides, writing you’ve never seen before?” Michael asked.

“Yeah I did, and yes it did, I later heard the Ministry has yet to decipher it.” Harry said.



"No, of course they wouldn't have deciphered it, its angelic script." Michael explained.

"Angelic script," Harry asked.

"It's my language, though I haven't used it in centuries." Michael said.

"What does it say?" Harry asked with his curiosity now peaked.

"Quite a bit, but the important thing you might be interested in hearing is; Enter here all who seek the Wait of the Dead but be warned, neither space nor time have meaning, lost you may become." Michael said in a deep voice that was not his own.

"The Wait of the Dead," Harry asked.

"Purgatory, it's a door to Purgatory." Michael clarified.

"Purgatory, no wonder I couldn't contact Sirius afterwards." Harry said more to himself than to Michael. "So Sirius is truly dead." Harry said sadly.

"I guess that depends on your definition of dead. If by dead you mean he's gone from your plain of existence, then he is truly dead but if you mean he can never come back, then he's very much alive." Michael said calmly.

"WHAT!" Harry yelled at the top of his lungs causing everyone in the castle to run into the library.

Michael just sat there quietly as they all filed in with Ginny in the lead.

"Is everything all right Harry?" Ginny asked breathlessly.

"Yes, everything is fine." Harry said composing himself. "I need a moment of privacy with Michael here." Harry said to her as he sat back down.

"Michael, the Michael you told me about?" Ginny asked, staring at the man sitting across from Harry.

"Yes," Harry answered simply.

“And you must be Ginny. I’ve heard quite a lot about you, it is my honor to meet you.” Michael said, standing to kiss her hand.

“Please Ginny, give us a few minutes.” Harry pressed.

“Ok Harry, we’ll be in the dining hall.” Ginny said, ushering the rest out of the room.

“What did you mean by very much alive?” Harry asked as soon as everyone was out of the library.

“It is called the Gateway to Wait; we use to use it to communicate with our kin in other timelines. You see, regardless of how many timelines or universes there are, there is only one Purgatory, so we would meet inside Purgatory to discuss with ourselves the various goings on in these other timelines. When I told you I was “Tuned” in to these other timelines, I meant that I had spoken to other Michaels from these timelines. But you must understand, Purgatory is only designed to hold human souls, not bodies, so Sirius is very much alive and well, albeit lost and confused no doubt.” Michael explained.

“Can we get him out?” Harry asked the question that was plaguing his mind.

“We, I don’t know about we, but I could.” Michael said.

“No, I need to find him, I NEED to rescue him.” Harry said in no uncertain terms.

“Harry, it could take weeks for me to prepare your mind for this place, the longer we wait, the longer Sirius remains in exile.” Michael said pleadingly.

“I don’t care, I want to save Sirius.” Harry stated again.

Michael sat in the oversized chair for fifteen minutes without saying a word, then without warning, he spoke again.

“Halloween, we’ll go on Halloween. I’ll spend the next few weeks teaching you proper mind control, and we’ll set off for the Ministry on Halloween.” Michael said quietly.

“When do I start my training?” Harry asked excitedly.

“I will come hear at three o’clock every morning from now until then. We’ll meet in your training area, I assume you have one,” Harry nodded, “then you will not discuss the training or Sirius or the Gateway with anyone, do you understand?” Michael added.

“Yes,” Harry answered.

“Then I’ll return tomorrow night at three, meet me at your front door to show me the way to your training room.” Michael said standing.

“Thank you, this means a lot to me.” Harry said sincerely.

“Don’t thank me yet, you still have to suffer through Purgatory.” Michael said cryptically as he shook Harry’s hand.

Harry escorted Michael to the training room of Potter Castle the following night. Michael waved his hand and two oversized pillows appeared on the floor for them to sit upon. Michael motioned to Harry to sit, and he sat himself.

“Let me explain what will happen when you enter; your mind will automatically create your surroundings, so if your thinking of Potter Castle, then you’ll appear in Potter Castle, if you’re thinking of Hogwarts, then you’ll appear in Hogwarts. The problem lies in the fact that I see what is actually there, nothing, blackness, I’ll see you interacting with things that aren’t really there, so if you’re being attacked by some monster your mind created, I cannot help you, oh, and neither can your magic.” Michael explained.

“So what do I have to do?” Harry asked.

“You’ll have to keep your mind completely clear of all thoughts. Your mind cannot wander, it cannot focus on the task, it has to be completely blank.” He said.

“Then how can I rescue Sirius?” Harry asked annoyed.

"That's what I'm going to teach you. You will learn how to perform tasks without having to use your conscious mind; you will use only your subconscious mind." Michael answered.

"The subconscious mind doesn't affect Purgatory?" Harry asked.

"No, only the conscious mind does." Michael clarified.

"I wonder what hell Sirius' mind has created." Harry said more to himself than to Michael.

"One can only guess Harry, but, let's not think about that right now, you need to begin your training. We'll start with simple mind clearing exercises over the next week, and move to more complex training next week. Are you ready?" He asked Harry.

Harry looked resolute. "Yes I am." Harry answered.

Michael spent the following weeks teaching Harry everything he needed to know about controlling his own mind. Out in the world at large, there were fewer attacks by Death Eaters but more by giants. The giants managed to slay several Dark Aurors before Neville and Snape were able to stop them. During that time, more than two hundred innocents were killed; twenty six Aurors and eighteen Dark Aurors were also killed. Harry became so obsessed with rescuing Sirius that he had made no ghostly appearances during his training. His friends kept pressuring him to tell them what was wrong, but he remained true to his word and said nothing.

Harry made sure that all his friends would be at Hogwarts for the big Halloween feast. He even instructed Ginny to take Cindy along for the festivities. Harry and Michael had made arrangements to meet at Castle Potter at nine o'clock sharp, and Michael was as punctual as always.

"Are you ready Harry?" Michael asked patiently.

"As ready as I'll ever be." Harry answered but doubt was showing in his words.

Michael folded space, and took himself and Harry through to the Ministry. When Harry looked at the artifact, he almost broke down crying. Perhaps it was Michael's training, or perhaps it was simple self control, but Harry composed himself and followed Michael down to the bottom of the pit.

"It's the moment of truth Harry, I'll ask you one last time, are you ready?" Michael asked again.

"Let's go," Harry answered simply.

They both entered together, side by side. When Harry looked around, he saw nothing but blackness; he took this to be a good thing. Unfortunately by thinking at all, the world around him changed. He was standing in the graveyard where Voldemort had made his return. Harry looked down at his feet and saw the gravestone of Tom Riddle senior, Harry jumped back.

"What am I doing here?" He asked himself.

Harry turned to a small hill that he recognized at the spot where he and Cedric appeared at the end of his fourth year. Suddenly another Harry and Cedric were standing on that hill clutching the Tri-wizard Tournament Cup. Harry watched as Cedric was killed and he began to try and intervene, but there was nothing he could do.

He tried to kill Wormtail, but his wand was just not working. Suddenly he heard a whisper in the air; "Harry come back," he looked around but saw only the graveyard. Then again; "Harry remember your training," Harry thought for a moment. The voice sounded familiar, but he couldn't place it.

"Training, what does it mean training?" Harry wondered.

Harry looked around again; he was standing in the training room of Potter Castle. Another Harry was being trained by Michael, "What's he teaching me?" Harry thought. "Mind control," Harry realized. Harry immediately reverted back to his training. When he opened his eyes, he was standing in complete darkness next to Michael.

"Try to stay focused." Michael told him condescendingly.

They walked through complete darkness; Harry had to fight his thoughts at every turn. There were millions of questions he needed to ask, but could not for fear of losing his concentration.

They continued walking for what seemed like hours and hours, but still all they saw were small white mists floating around. Then Harry saw someone, could it be him, could it be Sirius. Harry made no attempt to think about it, he just kept walking towards him.

Then Harry saw someone else, someone he had never seen before. This man looked no older than Michael looked, but was dressed in flowing robes of white and walking directly towards them.

"Why did you bring him here Michael?" The robed man asked.

"Gabriel, how nice to see you too," Michael said sarcastically.

"You know it's forbidden to bring a human into the Wait of the Dead." Gabriel told him.

"Harry, continue on, you see him now don't you? Michael asked.

"Yes," Harry answered.

"Get him like I taught you, and bring him here." Michael commanded.

"So Gabriel, what are you going to do, fight me?" Michael asked sarcastically.

"No Michael, I'm not going to fight you, but we are." Gabriel answered motioning to the other Gabriels that appeared.

"What's this, so many of you, should I be frightened?" Michael asked, still being sarcastic.

"There are over a hundred of me here, we can defeat you." Gabriel stated emphatically.

"Gabriel, I would hate to deprive over a hundred worlds of your existence, but I will if I must." Michael said turning as cold as ice.

"You are no match for a hundred of me." Gabriel said.

"You lost most of your power when you joined our brother Lucifer, he is my only match." Michael said coldly.

"Then maybe he should show himself." Michael heard a voice from behind him.

"Hello old friend, what brings you here?" Michael asked Lucifer.

"Hello brother, just wanted to know if you wanted to join me?" Lucifer said smiling.

"You know I'll never join you, I am God's sword, I defeated you once, and I'll do it again." Michael said calmly.

"Just thought I'd ask, so, I hear you're playing God these days." Lucifer said jovially.

"No, just helping out a friend." Michael answered back just as warmly.

"Well I've got to get back to my universe; I'll leave you to deal with the Gabriels." He said turning to go.

"Master, help us, we need you." Gabriel called out to him.

"No, you got yourselves into this mess on your own." He answered coldly.

"So, are you going to stand there looking stupid, or are you going to do something?" Michael asked Gabrielle speaking as coldly as Lucifer.

Harry walked up to Sirius, it was apparent that Sirius was yelling something Harry could not hear. Harry immediately thought of his training. He was to concentrate on Sirius with his entire mind and he would then open his eyes and see what Sirius saw.

Harry was standing on what he recognized as Godric's Hollow, his parents home before they were murdered by Voldemort. Harry was standing next to Sirius who was screaming at the sight in front of him. Harry looked and saw his father and mother being killed over and over again. Harry shook the picture from his mind and turned to Sirius.

"Sirius, it's me, Harry." Harry said calmly.

"NO, Harry is over there, I couldn't save them, they're dead!" Sirius screamed.

"Sirius, I'm over here! What you're looking at happened many years ago, it's only a memory!" Harry yelled at Sirius.

Sirius turned to Harry. "They're dead! It's all my fault! I killed them!" He screamed.

"NO SIRIUS, YOU DID NOT KILL THEM, VOLDEMORT DID!" Harry screamed back at him.

"They're dead!" Sirius screamed again.

Harry did something he never thought he would; he punched Sirius in the face.

"Snap out of it! You are not responsible for these events, Voldemort is!" Harry yelled again.

Sirius stared at Harry; it appeared like he was trying to remember something.

"Harry, is that you?" Sirius asked, touching Harry's face.

"Yes it's me, my godfather; I need you to listen closely, close your eyes and don't open them until I tell you. Do you understand?" Harry asked breathlessly.

"Yes," Sirius answered.

"Close your eyes now." Harry commanded.

Sirius did as he was told. The world Harry was looking at faded, and he was staring at the blackness once again. Harry picked up Sirius and began walking back to Michael.

Michael was standing nose to nose with one of the Gabriels, the rest were closing in on them.



“Well, what are you going to do?” Michael asked again.

“I think it’s about time you died my old friend.” Gabriel answered taking out a sword from under his robes.

“So be it.” Michael answered, conjuring a sword of his own.

Michael watched as the other hundred Gabriels pulled out swords of their own. The fighting began without any prerequisite, Michael kept himself positioned so that all of the Gabriels were out in front of him, and would allow none to come in behind.

Michael was relentless, he wielded the sword like the master swordsman he was. No magic was being used, either by choice or happenstance, but none was used just the same. The battle waged on as Harry approached, being the swordsman he was from one of the other timelines; Harry decided to help his friend. He placed Sirius on the ground, instructed him to keep his eyes closed, picked up a sword from a dead Gabriel, and attacked from the opposite side.

Harry was as relentless as Michael; he took down Gabriels almost as fast as Michael had. After an hour of constant fighting, the last Gabriel stood toe to toe with Michael.

“You’re the last; do you really want to continue this?” Michael asked him calmly.

“Your protégé fights with great skill, you’ve obviously taught him well.” Gabriel said, placing the sword on the ground.

“You are a Magi of honor, I salute you.” Michael said, raising his sword to his head and bowing.

The last Gabriel turned and left. Michael looked at Harry with a new found respect.

“Let’s get Sirius home.” Michael said simply.

Harry secretly placed Sirius in one of the unused bedrooms, he instructed Dobby and Winky to nurse him back to health. Sirius’

ordeal in Purgatory left him in shambles, he had almost no strength to speak of, and his magic still had not returned.

“Thank you Michael, for everything.” Harry said with tears in his eyes.

“Now, all that’s left is Riddle, get rid of him so I can visit more often, and we’ll be even.” Michael answered Harry with a smile and an embrace. “Take care of yourself Harry, and follow your heart.” Michael said turning to go.

“Michael, are you really thousands of years old?” Harry asked curiously.

“About forty thousand Earth years old to be exact,” Michael said smiling. “But I don’t look a day over thirty thousand.” He added, leaving Harry with a smile.

Harry spent the first week of November caring for and watching over Sirius. Everyone in the castle kept asking him where he was getting off to, but Harry would not answer. Fred and George had passed their NEWTS, and Molly and Arthur were proud. Fred and George scored the largest number of NEWTS of any Weasley, even Bill and Percy.

The routine at the castle was starting to go back to normal. Harry was smiling and laughing again, he was playing with Cindy more often, and was much more affectionate towards Ginny than ever before.

On the morning of the 9th of November, Dobby appeared to Harry babbling incoherently, until Harry could calm him down.

“What is it Dobby, is everything all right?” Harry asked impatiently.

“Master Sir, mister Sirius Black is awake.” Dobby managed to spit out, Harry apparated to Sirius’ room.

“You look good for a dead guy.” Harry said with tears in his eyes.

“How long have I been asleep?” Sirius asked.

“About nine days.” Harry answered.

“Did everybody get out of the Ministry alright?” He asked, referring to the night Sirius went into the Gateway.

“Yeah, no problems,” Harry said smiling.

“What happened to me? The last thing I remember was dueling with Bellatrix, then I, I don’t remember what.” Sirius said.

“It’s a long story, and I think you’re still too weak to hear it.” Harry explained.

“Where am I?” He asked, not recognizing the room.

“That’s also a long story, but we’ll talk after you’ve eaten.” Harry said, taking the tray Winky had brought in, and placing it on Sirius’ bed.

Sirius ate quietly; Harry sat patiently as he finished off four sandwiches, and three bottles of butterbeer. When Sirius had finally finished eating, his willingness to wait for an answer to his questions diminished.

“Ok, I’m stronger; now tell me what I want to know.” Sirius demanded.

“We all thought you were dead. You stepped into what the ministry thought was an arc of death, but it turned out to be a gateway to Purgatory, which is where you’ve been for the last year and a half.” Harry explained.

“Purgatory, a year and a half,” Sirius couldn’t believe his ears.

“There’s more, since you’ve been gone, Arthur Weasley has become minister, I have finished school, I got married and, oh yeah, I adopted a daughter.” Harry said quickly.

“You what,” Sirius exclaimed.

“You heard me; I’m a husband, father, lord of Potter Castle, and dead.” Harry said shortly.

“Dead, you don’t look dead to me.” Sirius said.

"I was hit in the chest by a killing curse from Voldemort." Harry explained.

"If that's true, than how are you talking to me?" Sirius asked.

"Because I've learned quite a bit of magic since you disappeared." Harry said.

"There is no defense from the killing curse." Sirius stated emphatically.

"Really, than why didn't Voldemort die when his spell rebounded on him when I was one?" Harry asked in return.

"Um, I don't know, but there has to be a logical reason." Sirius deduced.

"There is, he's a phoenix animagus, and since a phoenix is reborn from its own ashes, he cannot die, so he just maintains a half transformation so he's outwardly human and internally a phoenix." Harry explained.

"But how does that relate to you?" Sirius asked his curiosity now peaked.

"Because I am a griffin animagus," Harry answered.

"Oh my, I have been out of touch." Sirius said confused.

"I won't go into details now about how I was trained, but I'll still try to get you up to speed. Let's see, where do I start? Oh yeah, here goes, you are in Potter Castle, I built the castle using the Black family fortune you left me, apparently you didn't know how vast the fortune was. I married Ginny Weasley with the approval of her father Minister Weasley. I was in charge of the Ministry's newest department the Department of Dark Magic Enforcement, the DME for short. Everyone who works for the DME are called Dark Aurors. I faked my death in front of Voldemort so he would come out of hiding but still hasn't. I adopted a five year old witch named Cindy; she'll be six in December. I can do wandless magic, elemental magic, advanced apparition, and like I said earlier, I'm an animagus. I have trained members of the Order of the Phoenix, members of the DME and even my own

daughter Cindy. She's capable of wandless magic, elemental magic and is also an animagus." Harry said, finally pausing for a breath.

"You taught a five year old girl how to do wandless and elemental magic, and trained her to be an animagus?" Sirius asked more impressed by these issues than all the others.

"Would you like to meet her?" Harry asked.

"I would love to meet her." Sirius stated unequivocally.

Harry closed his eyes, and a little girl appeared.

"Yes daddy," she asked.

"Cindy, remember how I told you how important godparents are?" Harry asked her.

"Yes daddy," she answered smiling.

"This is my godfather, Sirius Black." Harry said, motioning to Sirius on the bed.

"Hello Sirius, aren't you dead?" She asked in her childlike voice.

Sirius began laughing. "Yes Cindy, they tell me I was." He managed during fits of laughter.

"Cindy, I think it's time everyone in the castle should see Sirius." Harry told his daughter.

Harry told Sirius to change while he informed the others about him. Harry went down to the library and asked Winky to assemble all who were in the castle, and to go to Hogwarts and inform Dumbledore, McGonagall, Snape, Charlie, Hagrid, Ron, Hermione, Neville, Ginny, Luna and Draco that he had a very important announcement to make and needed them all here.

When they and Arthur, Molly, Bill, Annie, Peggy, George, Fred, Tonks and Lee were all present, Harry began speaking.

"I'm sure you've all either seen or have heard that I have been acting strangely and secretive, the reason for this has been that I came across important information about the way Sirius died." Harry started.

"Was this information from Michael?" Ginny asked.

"Yes my love, it was. I have never been the same since he died, so anything to help me cope was good, except this information would do more for me than help me cope, it would make me whole again. Michael informed me that the archway in the Department of Mysteries is not an archway of death, but a gateway to somewhere else." Harry continued.

"To where, Harry?" Arthur asked.

"To a place called the Wait of the Dead, or as we call it; Purgatory." Harry waited for the information to sink in.

"So either way he's dead." Snape said.

"As it was put to me; if by dead you mean he's no longer in this realm, than yes he's dead, but if you mean he can no longer return, than he's very much alive." Harry answered using Michael's words.

"How can he return?" Albus asked.

"Well, someone would have to go and get him, someone like Michael or me for instance." Harry answered.

"No Harry, that's too dangerous, you can't go." Hermione exclaimed nervously.

"She's right Harry, you can't help him there." Ginny agreed.

"Does anybody have faith in me?" Harry asked the group.

"We all have faith in you Harry, but it is too dangerous." Albus answered for the group.

"I think you can do it, I think you should do it. If it's ok for you to risk your life to save complete strangers, or in my case enemies, you should have our blessing to save someone you love." Draco spoke up.

Harry stared at his one time enemy, walked over to him, and embraced him tightly.

"And I would be honored to go with you." Draco added.

"Draco, you're like a brother to me, I would never let you risk your life for just one man, besides, I'm not going." Harry said, causing the room to breathe a sigh of relief. "I love you all, but I would have never given you foreknowledge of something as dangerous as this." Harry said.

"What are you saying Harry? If you're not going, than who is?" Arthur asked.

"He already went." Hermione deduced.

"That again folks is why I consider Hermione the smartest human being on the planet." Harry said smiling at her.

"What happened Harry?" Dumbledore asked calmly.

"I got to fight a bunch of magi, I got to see my worst memory, I got to see Sirius' worst memory and, oh yeah, I brought my godfather home." Harry added coldly.

Sirius walked in on cue, he was wearing the uniform of the Dark Aurors with no rank insignia. All eyes watched as he approached Harry and embraced him as a son. No one could speak; standing before them was the deceased Sirius Black, just as he was when he left.

"Hello all, Harry has tried to get me up to speed on what's been going on. I dare say I am not as needed as I thought I would be." Sirius said smiling.

He walked right up to Snape and extended his hand. "I hope you'll forgive all my sins Severus, a year of torment taught me what I did to

you was wrong, and I have always deserved your anger.” Sirius said apologetically.

“And I hope you’ll forgive me for endangering your godson’s life because of an old rivalry that should have died years ago.” Snape responded forgoing the handshake, and embracing Sirius instead.

“Well Harry, it seems our number has increased by one very talented wizard.” Dumbledore said smiling.

“I agree Albus, but please everybody, try to go easy on him about all that’s transpired over the last year and a half, it was hard enough on him to find out I married Ginny, and I have a daughter. So Peggy, Annie, please be subtle when you introduce yourselves,” Harry added jokingly.

The entire group sat down to dinner in the dining hall. Harry had Sirius sit on his right, and Ginny on his left. Sitting next to Sirius, Harry strategically placed Annie Weasley so she could tell him about being reunited with her family, and of course, playing the matchmaker again.

“Sirius, did Harry tell you how he found my missing sisters?” Ginny asked, trying to invoke a conversation between Sirius and Annie.

“No, I didn’t even know you had sisters.” Sirius answered honestly.

“Annie, tell him the story.” Ginny told her sister.

They began talking merrily, Harry marveled at how Ginny picked up on what he was doing, and helped it along.

“Are you doing what I was trying to do?” Harry asked his wife.

“I’m not as blind as you think I am.” Ginny answered, giving Harry a deep kiss.

“Sirius, did Harry tell you your name was cleared, you’re no longer a wanted man.” Arthur announced.

“He did what?” Sirius asked.



“He cleared your name when he killed Pettigrew, and brought in his lifeless body, I signed the papers personally.” Arthur added.

“I’m a free man?” Sirius asked Harry with a tear in his eye.

“As free as any man,” Harry answered.

Sirius stood and hugged his godson again.

“James would be proud.” Sirius whispered in Harry’s ear.

The makeshift celebration ended shortly before ten, the ones from Hogwarts made their way back, and those that resided in Potter Castle retired to the library.

“So, how long are you all staying?” Sirius asked the remaining guests.

“Indefinitely, they live here Sirius.” Harry answered.

“Really, how nice.” Sirius said turning to Annie.

Molly ushered the rest off to bed leaving Sirius and Annie alone. Harry found it just as humorous that Molly was thinking along the same lines as he and Ginny. Tomorrow would dawn a better day.

## Chapter 8

Christmas approached with blinding speed. The Death Eaters had made several attempts at muggle targets, only to be foiled by one or more Dark Aurors. Both Ron and Hermione had by that point made the cover of Witch Weekly, as did Neville and the Unas clan leader Mktor. Voldemort had been seen on several occasions, giving Harry and the rest the idea that the plan was working.

On the 20th of December, Harry had cancelled all training for the holidays, so as to include Cindy's birthday on the 21st. Harry prepared an elaborate party that was to include all of the friends and family that knew he was alive.

Summer was in full swing in Australia, the sun was shining, the water was seasonably warm, and the castle was buzzing early on the 21st. Cindy thought she would be the first one down the stairs that morning, but was happy to see her father adding the finishing touches on the birthday decorations.

"Hi daddy," she yelled coming down the stairs.

"Happy birthday Cindy," Harry said, taking his daughter into a tight embrace.

"Can I open my presents now?" She asked expectantly.

"No, not until the party later," He said smiling.

"Oh, ok," she said disappointedly.

Ginny was the third one down the stairs that day, she was wearing a bikini with a long see-through shirt over it.

"Going to the beach Gin?" Harry asked.

"Of course, have you seen how beautiful it is today?" Ginny asked in an obvious tone.

"You know, everyone at Hogwarts is going to start wondering how you maintain that tan when it's winter in Europe." Harry said playfully.

"And they'd really wonder how it is that I have no tan line." Ginny added.

"I won't tell if you won't." Harry continued, making Ginny laugh.

"Are you coming Cindy?" Ginny asked her.

"Ok, I'll go get my bathing suit." Cindy said, running up the stairs.

Harry spent the remainder of the morning planning Cindy's birthday party and directing the residents of the castle to the beach for a swim. By lunch all but Harry, Dumbledore and Arthur had resolved to go to the beach.

Harry was discussing the recent events with Arthur and Albus, neither he nor they were particularly concerned with the recent attacks but all agreed Voldemort would soon attack himself, and the Dark Aurors wouldn't be able to stop him.

"If he attacks Albus, only Harry can face him and survive." Arthur said.

"Perhaps, but there are alternatives to fighting him," Albus explained.

"Like advance apparition." Harry added.

"Exactly, most of the Dark Aurors have been trained in advance apparition; they can simply remove those in danger and apparate away." Albus explained further.

"So when do you anticipate trapping Voldemort?" Arthur asked tentatively.

"The Vernal Equinox, his powers will be at full strength, and he'll fear nothing or nobody." Harry answered calmly.

"How and where to you plan to lure him?" Arthur asked.

I'll lure him by assembling every Ministry official and their families in one place, as to the where I still need permission." Harry answered somewhat vaguely.

"You mean Hogwarts." Albus added.

"Yes sir I do. The Quidditch pitch to be exact. I want to have enough seating put in to accommodate all the guests, and then I want to lure Riddle by announcing publicly that they'll all be there." Harry explained.

"Why Hogwarts," Arthur asked.

"If I'm not mistaken Harry, you need a location they cannot get to prior to the designated time." Albus surmised.

"Exactly, Hogwarts has too many wards on it to give them any opportunities prior to the actual event." Harry concurred.

"And what will this event be?" Arthur continued his barrage of questions.

"The Harry Potter Memorial," Harry said with a smile.

"Oh, I like it, if anything will draw Voldemort out, it's a Harry Potter memorial." Arthur said laughing.

"I was personally thinking of a bronze statue, what do you think Albus?" Harry asked jokingly.

"I'm not sure Harry, shouldn't it be gold?" Albus asked with a sparkle in his eye and a smile on his face.

"Gold it is." Arthur declared. "We'll announce in March of the erection of the Harry Potter Memorial, a ten meter tall gold statute, in front of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry." Arthur said smiling. The others laughed out loud.

"And what is all this happiness I hear?" Ginny asked, entering the room.

“Just business Ginny, just business.” Arthur answered.

“Well, enough business, there is a six year old girl who is in dire need of gifts waiting in the ball room.” Ginny said, dragging Harry off his chair.

As Harry, Albus and Arthur were walking out of the library; Snape entered and walked up to Arthur.

“May I have a word Minister?” Snape asked as coldly as ever.

Harry, Ginny and Albus all continued on to Cindy’s party while Arthur remained to talk to Snape.

Harry had again altered the ball room into a meadow, the trees were decorated in a combination of magical and muggle decorations, a better party location did not exist.

There were party games, food, cake, and most importantly, gifts. Cindy was being spoiled rotten by Harry; he made sure everyone had given her three gifts each. Sirius spent the most time playing with Cindy, Harry had the distinct impression that he was enjoying himself more than she was.

Just prior to the opening of gifts, Peggy walked up to Harry and whispered in his ear.

“Can I talk to you for a moment?” She asked politely.

“Sure Peggy, where would you like to go?” He asked back in a whisper.

“The library,” she said, and Harry followed her out.

When he walked back into the library, Arthur and Molly were talking to Snape.

“Hey, only one party at a time,” Harry joked.

“Harry, I wanted to ask you a favor.” Snape said.

“Of course Severus, anything,” Harry responded.

“Peggy has agreed to be my wife.” Snape blurted out.

“Congratulations,” Harry exclaimed. “What ever you want is yours.” Harry added.

“I, that is to say, we want you to marry us.” Snape said suddenly.

“Me, how can I marry you?” Harry asked.

“You do own two motor yachts and a sailing yacht don’t you?” Snape asked back.

Harry suddenly realized he was the master of all his vessels. “It would be an honor to preside over the ceremony.” Harry declared.

Snape shook Harry’s hand as did Arthur, Molly and Peggy each gave him a kiss on either cheek.

“We’re going to announce it tonight, after Cindy goes to bed.” Peggy said, as she took Snape’s hand and left the library.

“They don’t want to take the limelight away from Cindy.” Molly clarified as she and Arthur walked passed.

By eight o’clock the party was winding down, Cindy had opened all but her father’s gifts. She walked over to the small, neatly wrapped package sitting on the gift table.

“What is it daddy?” She asked as she surveyed the package.

“Just a little something I had made up.” Harry said smiling.

When she opened the box that was wrapped in pink and blue paper, she saw a locket in the shape of a winged lion, she opened the locket to reveal a magical picture of Harry, Ginny and Cindy on the wedding day, and a muggle picture of Harry and Cindy in front of Potter Castle.

“So you’ll always remember your family.” Harry said smiling.

“Daddy I love it, it’s beautiful.” Cindy said, running to show Ginny.

Cindy was ushered to bed shortly thereafter. The house elves magically cleaned the ball room, and Harry had everyone retire to the library.

"That was a beautiful locket Harry, any special secrets?" Hermione asked.

"No, just a simple locket, no special features either magical or otherwise." Harry said.

Harry secretly had Dobby and Winky prepare his best champagne and enough glasses for all in anticipation of Snape's and Peggy's announcement.

"Everyone, may I have your attention." Arthur exclaimed, causing everyone to look at him. "I know you must have thought Molly and I were crazy when we allowed, recommended actually, that Harry and Ginny wed, but there is no greater feeling in the world than to escort your daughter down the aisle. It seems I may have that distinct honor once again." He paused for effect. "Severus has asked for Peggy's hand in marriage, Molly and I have given our blessing." He declared.

The room exploded with congratulations for the happy couple. None would have believed it, but Snape actually look happy.

Arthur waited for the room to quiet once again. "The happy day has been set for the 26th of December, Boxing Day. The ceremony will be held on the sailing yacht Lady Molly just along side of this island. Our black haired son will preside over the ceremony." Arthur waited for that to sink in.

"Harry's going to marry them?" Hermione blurted out.

"Yes. Harry agreed to marry them earlier today which is why it's being held on the Lady Molly. Now, Severus and Peggy have something they'd like to say." Arthur concluded, motioning to his middle daughter.

"Thank you all for your kind wishes. I would like to formally ask my sister Annie if she would do me the honor of being my maid of honor." She said aloud.

"I would love to." Annie cried as she hugged her sister tightly.

"Everyone knows I've always been a loner." Snape began. "The closest person I've ever had to a friend has always been Albus Dumbledore, so Albus would you do Peggy and me the honor of being my best man?" Snape asked.

"Severus, I have always known you to be an upstanding individual, and though I haven't done this in a good many years, it would be an honor to stand as your best man." Albus said.

"There you have it folks, the future Mr. and Mrs. Severus Snape." Arthur said.

The room exploded with applause.

Christmas day was another beautiful day in the Whitsunday islands of Queensland Australia. The sky was free of even fair weather clouds, and birds could be heard as far as the mainland. Cindy was sitting on the floor of the library, tearing open all the gifts with her name on them. Harry sat there smiling, taking solace in the fact that if he couldn't have had the perfect Christmas when he was young, Cindy most certainly would.

No one else was stirring yet, Harry assumed either they chose to stay in bed, or they were just sleeping late on purpose, but either way he was happy to be alone with Cindy.

Ginny walked into the library carrying a cup of tea for herself and a cup of coffee for Harry.

"I see there's just no controlling this gift monger." Ginny said smiling.

"Yeah I might be spoiling her this time of year." Harry answered smiling.

"Happy Christmas Gin," Harry said, kissing Ginny deeply.

"Happy Christmas my love," she answered back.



Slowly but surely everyone started filing in, Arthur and Molly were among the first, they were upset to find out Cindy had started opening up her gifts. Once they all were present, Harry began handing out the gifts. Cindy, who was done with hers, began hovering over everybody else while they opened their presents.

Breakfast was served in the library so everyone could continue opening their presents. Harry secretly wished he had spent Christmases like this when he was young.

When the presents were all opened, and the wrappings lay on the floor, they all went back upstairs to dress for the day.

Harry noticed that Draco was purposely waiting for the room to empty, so Harry waited as well.

"Can I talk to you Harry?" Draco asked.

"Sure mate, what's up?" Harry asked back.

"You know I've had a thing for a muggle girl, right?" He asked.

"Yeah," Harry said.

"The night of Cindy's party I met with her again. I finally told her I was a wizard." Draco said.

"And," Harry pressed.

"And she's ok with it. She still wants to be with me." Draco added.

"That's great mate." Harry said, patting him on the back.

"I was wondering if I could bring her to the wedding tomorrow." Draco said.

"I have no objections. If you trust her, than I trust her." Harry said smiling.

"Thanks mate, I really appreciate it." Draco said, shaking Harry's hand.

"Is she staying the night, or are you bringing her home?" Harry asked.

"If you don't mind, I'd like her to stay through New Years." Draco answered.

"Sure, no problem with me, but won't her parents mind?" Harry questioned.

"She lives at the university, she's of age." Draco said.

"Bring her along." Harry said smiling.

"Thanks again." Draco said, turning to leave.

The remainder of the day was spent on preparing for Christmas dinner, and preparing for the wedding on Boxing Day.

During lunch Cho ran into the dining hall and whispered into Arthur's ear. Arthur stood, nodded to Harry and Albus, and walked out. Harry and Albus nodded to each other, and followed him out.

"What's happened Arthur?" Albus asked as they entered the library.

"Voldemort attacked the house of a Ministry member." Arthur said.

"Who's house?" Harry asked.

"Mine." Arthur answered honestly.

"The burrow, what happened?" Harry pressed.

"Apparently he found a way to bypass the wards I had on my home, but that's not all, he also destroyed the headquarters of the Order." Arthur added.

"Anything else," Albus asked.

"Witnesses say he was livid, no people in either house." Arthur said sounding jovial.

Harry could barely contain his laughter.

“How do you think he found those places?” Arthur asked.

“I have my suspicions.” Albus said in his usual cryptic manor.

“You don’t think it was Percy, do you?” Arthur asked.

“I do, but the question remains, did he inform Riddle by choice or under duress.” Albus explained.

“I know Percy’s ambitious, but I would never suspect him of betraying his family, besides, he didn’t know where the headquarters were.” Arthur added.

“Unless someone told him,” Harry piped in.

“What are you thinking Harry?” Albus asked him.

“Molly. She was most distraught when Percy had the falling out with the family, she could have innocently told him where they were.” Harry explained.

Arthur did not know what to think. Was Percy a traitor, or was he being tortured, either way it wasn’t looking good.

“We need to find Percy.” Arthur declared.

“I know where he is.” Harry said softly.

“What did you say Harry?” Albus asked.

“I know where he is.” Harry said, raising his voice.

“How would you know that?” Arthur asked.

“He’s wearing a special ring, a tracking ring.” Harry said.

“How do you know he still has it?” Albus asked.

“Because if it ever removed an alarm sounds in my war room,” Harry answered.

“What war room Harry?” Albus pressed.

"I have a secret room in the castle that not even Ginny knows about, there I can track and monitor every one of my friends and family, as well as every Dark Auror." Harry explained.

"May we see this war room?" Arthur asked.

"Follow me gentlemen." Harry directed them to one of the farthest bookcases, waved his hand in front of it, and it opened.

Inside Arthur and Albus saw a huge map of Europe, displayed on it were hundreds of little green dots with labels showing who each one was, not unlike the Marauders Map. Harry pointed to London where a green dot labeled Percy was stationary. Harry touched the dot, and the map zoomed in to that location. They saw Percy was in a building on the east side of the city.

"He's unharmed." Harry declared.

"How do you know?" Arthur asked.

"Because if he were being harmed his dot would be yellow, if he were near Riddle then his dot would be blue." Harry explained.

"And if he were dead?" Arthur pressed.

"Then the dot would be red." Harry continued.

"So you think he's told them of his own free will." Arthur stated.

"No, they could have used Veritus serum. That would not show up on the map." Harry answered him.

"Someone has to go there." Albus added.

"And it can't be a family member." Harry agreed.

"Why not a family member," Arthur asked.

"Because Arthur, if he's chosen the wrong side, a family member might take matters into their own hands," Albus explained.

"I'll go, and I'll take Neville with me. He's the most advanced apparator we have." Harry said.

"Go now Harry, I need to know." Arthur pressed.

They emerged from the war room immediately thereafter. Harry instructed Dobby to bring Neville into the library, and he waited.

Neville was there within moments.

"Neville, we have a mission." Harry said.

"Command me Harry." Neville said without a hint of doubt.

Harry quickly explained the situation to Neville. The plan was to remain apparated until they could evaluate the situation.

When they apparated to where Percy was, they found they were in an abandoned dungeon, Percy was in one of the cells, shackled to the cold stone wall. Harry looked around and saw an empty bottle of Veritus serum on the floor.

Percy's eyes were unfocussed, his head was bobbing from one side to another, and it was obvious that the Death Eaters had given him the entire bottle.

While still apparated, Harry instructed Neville to take him to a secure level of Potter Castle and told him to have the house elves nurse him back to health. Harry was to remain to see who was responsible.

Harry made himself invisible and walked up to one of the upper levels where he saw a group of Death Eaters talking to Bellatrix Lestrange via the floo network.

"The Dark Lord has determined he has outlived his usefulness, kill Weasley." She commanded and vanished from the fireplace.

"It's about time too I was sick and tired of hearing that brat whine about everything." The larger Death Eater said to another one.

"I don't think you're going to kill anybody." A half visible Harry said.

"It's Potter's ghost!" The youngest Death Eater, whom Harry recognized as one of the students he used to play Quidditch against, exclaimed.

Harry just waved his hand and all the Death Eater began choking, a moment later they were all dead, Harry simply apparated home.

Harry went straight to the secure level of the castle; Neville, Dobby and Winky were standing around Percy's bed.

"What do you think Winky?" Harry asked.

"Too much potion, needs anti-potion." Winky explained.

"Do we have any?" Harry asked.

"Yes master, Rhimi is getting some now." Winky said.

"Is he still under Veritus serum?" Harry asked.

"Yes master Harry." Winky answered.

Harry turned to Percy. He began questioning him about his time as a spy. Apparently Percy had been supplying the Death Eaters with misinformation for months until they caught on to him two weeks before. They had him shackled in that dungeon feeding him only Veritus serum. Harry felt satisfaction in his decision to kill the Death Eaters.

Harry went back to the Christmas party, evidently Arthur had told them about the Burrow, and that Harry had gone to check on some things. When Harry walked in to the dining hall, he nodded again to Arthur and Albus, and walked to the library.

"What did you find out?" Arthur asked impatiently.

"As I suspected Veritus serum," Harry said.

"Is he all right?" Arthur pressed.

"He'll be fine by morning; they've been feeding him an endless supply of the potion." Harry explained.

Arthur got a hard look on his face. "I hope they won't be doing that to anybody else, ever." Arthur said coldly.

"Don't worry Arthur, I made sure of it." Harry assured him.

"Can I see him?" Arthur asked.

"Of course, Dobby will show you where he is. Dobby," Harry called.

"Yes master Harry?" Dobby asked.

"Please show the Minister where Percy is." Harry instructed him.

"Yes master Harry." Dobby said, leading Arthur out.

"Albus, can you please tell Molly." Arthur said as he was leaving.

"Of course Arthur," Albus responded.

Percy was moved to Arthur and Molly's room in the castle. Arthur wanted to ensure Percy would feel at home when he woke up. Arthur was joined by Molly, Bill, Charlie and the girls; they sat in the kitchen of the duplicate Burrow.

"Ok Winky, wake him up." Arthur commanded.

Percy began to stir.

"Percy dear, its mum," Molly said softly.

Percy opened his eyes and stared at his mother. A look of utmost terror moved across his face.

"Mum, dad, Voldemort; he knows about the Burrow!" Percy exclaimed while attempting to get up.

"It's all right dear." Molly soothed him.

"The family's in danger!" Percy screamed trying to get his parents attention.

"Son, no one is in danger, you're safe." Arthur said.

"But Voldemort knows of the Burrow, he could be here any minute." Percy pressed.

"No son, not here." Arthur said softly.

"Relax little brother, we're all fine." Bill said, walking into Percy's line of sight.

Percy sat up and looked around, though he was still disoriented, he noticed he was lying on the couch in the sitting room of his childhood home.

"I don't understand, I heard the Death Eaters say they were going to destroy the Burrow." Percy said, looking around.

"They did son." Arthur said quietly.

"But we're here." Percy said confused.

"This isn't the Burrow son, it's our safe house. It has been enchanted to look just like the Burrow, views and all." Arthur told Percy.

Percy looked around confused; he could not grasp how this place was not the Burrow. The smells, the books, everything was as he remembered it.

"If this isn't the Burrow, then where are we?" Percy asked his father.

"I can't answer that yet, but I can tell you we're not even in Britain, as a matter of fact, we're not even in Europe." Arthur answered, allowing Harry his anonymity.

"Am I allowed to leave?" Percy asked.

"Of course Percy, you're not a prisoner." Ginny answered. "And if you really feel the need to know, you're in my castle." Ginny continued.

"Your castle, you have a castle?" Percy asked even more confused.

"Yes Percy, and if you like, I'll take you on a tour." Ginny said smiling. "Dobby," she called out. Dobby appeared instantly. "Please bring the enchanted chair." Ginny told the elf, who bowed and popped back out.



"We enchanted a floating chair so you don't have to get up." Molly clarified.

Dobby returned moments later, and Arthur, Bill and Charlie helped Percy onto it. Ginny pushed him out the door of the room, and out onto the corridor. She continued wheeling him down to the main floor and into the dining hall where the rest, except for Harry, were congregating.

"Hello Percy," Dumbledore greeted him. The rest followed suit.

"This castle is huge; it has a room enchanted to look like the Burrow." Percy was telling Fred.

"We know Perce; we've been living here for a while." Fred answered.

"And Ginny owns it?" He asked for clarification.

"Yeah, you believe it?" George added smiling.

Percy caught sight of Snape, Percy almost turned white.

"Professor Snape, hello sir." Percy said nervously.

"Mr. Weasley, I hear you held your own with the Death Eaters, adequate work." Snape said.

"High praise indeed," Dumbledore said, making them all laugh.

"Well Peggy, looks like you'll have the whole family for your wedding." Ginny said happily.

"Wedding, what wedding, who are you marrying?" Percy asked.

"I'm marrying Severus." Peggy answered, giving Snape a quick hug.

"You're what?" Percy questioned again.

"Mr. Weasley, I think I find that insulting." Snape said in a cold, hard voice.

"I'm sorry Professor, but this is quite a shock." Percy clarified.

“Well if my marrying your older sister comes as a shock, then I guess hearing that your younger sister is already married must be even worse.” Snape said with a hint of satisfaction.

“What did you say?” He asked.

“He said I’m married, and I am.” Ginny said.

“To whom are you married?” Percy asked indignantly.

“Harry Potter.” Fred answered for her.

“Harry Potter, but he’s dead.” Percy said angrily.

“Am I, Percy, well if that were true, than you’re dead also. Before I left your prison, I heard the Death Eaters were going to kill you.” Harry said, entering the room.

“Harry,” Percy started and then turned to Arthur. “What is going on here?” He demanded.

Arthur and Molly spent the better part of Christmas night explaining everything that had been happening within the inner circle. By eleven o’clock that evening, Percy was up to speed, and they all gathered in the library to discuss all that Percy had seen and heard.

“I never saw anybody higher than Bellatrix Lestrange but I did hear some interesting things. Voldemort has been angry over the fact that almost all his Death Eater attacks have been spoiled. He was going to use the Burrow and the Order of the Phoenix headquarters destruction to prove to his followers that he was still powerful.” Percy was explaining to the group.

“And now that no one was hurt, it makes it appear that the Dark Aurors are one step ahead of him again.” Dumbledore added.

“Not to mention Percy’s escape, his followers are going to think he’s incompetent.” Harry continued for Dumbledore.

“So the question remains what next?” Snape said what they were all thinking.

"Next Severus, we go after Riddle himself." Harry said calmly.

"He's very powerful Harry, he won't be easy to defeat." Percy explained.

"Perhaps, but I'll lure him out on the summer solstice." Harry said flatly, getting strange looks from Arthur and Albus.

"The solstice would definitely be an interesting time." Dumbledore said, trying to read Harry's expression.

"It certainly will Albus, what do you think Arthur?" Harry asked.

"Yes, I see its significance." Arthur answered.

Without saying a word, Harry managed to get across to Arthur and Albus his sudden concerns about Percy.

"But where would you set this trap?" Dumbledore asked.

"I was thinking the Ministry; he has no problem showing himself there." Harry said, showing no emotion.

"Yes, I agree Harry." Dumbledore said smiling.

"And you Arthur, do you agree?" Dumbledore asked, referring to Percy and not to the location.

"I'll need time to evaluate it; I'll give you a more definitive answer next month." Arthur gave a political response.

"We'll talk at another time, for now, we should retire for the evening, tomorrow's a big day." Dumbledore said, referring to the wedding.

"Indeed." Arthur agreed.

They all made their way to their respective bedrooms. Dumbledore gave Harry a knowing look before retiring. The next day will be a day of celebration.

## Chapter 9

The morning of Boxing Day, Harry had the house elves bustling about even more so than on his own wedding day. Harry felt making this day special for Severus and Peggy was his most important task. He considered Severus one of his good friends, and more importantly, one of his most valued councilors.

Harry spent the entire night reading about many different wedding ceremonies, and tried to put together the best parts of each. He spent several of those hours researching various spells to ensure this boat ride would be the most memorable for everybody.

While practicing some spells in the early morning sunrise, Bill approached Harry from the castle proper.

"Harry, do you have a minute?" Bill asked.

"Sure Bill, what do you need?" Harry asked back.

"That item you wanted me to purchase, I finally got it, but it ended up costing almost a hundred thousand Galleons to get. Not to mention, I had to use some of the connections from your businesses in Knockturn Alley." Bill said.

"You got it, excellent, please do me a favor and keep it in the vault and most importantly, don't tell anybody." Harry said sternly.

"I won't, don't worry, but I have to ask, why would you spend all that money if you didn't want it displayed?" Bill asked.

"You'll understand, trust me, but for right now, I just want it safe. On another note, did you take your Christmas bonus this year?" Harry asked, evidently trusting Bill implicitly.

"Yeah I did, and are you sure you want to pay me that much? It's more than my entire year's salary." Bill said nervously.

“Look at it this way Bill, if a small percentage is that much money, than my cut should be that much better.” Harry said smiling. “And, think about how much my cut will be next year.” He added.

“I understand and thank you Harry, words cannot express how I feel.” Bill said sincerely.

“You’re very welcome, now please go, I have a lot of work before the ceremony.” Harry told him with a sparkle in his eye.

The wedding was set for nine o’clock that evening; Peggy was to stay in the east wing of the castle until it was time to board the boat. She and the rest of the wedding party were set up to board before Severus and Albus.

Harry, Severus, Albus, Arthur and Ron were meeting in the war room of Potter Castle when Harry heard over the muggle radio that there had been an accident at Wembley Stadium.

“The television is reporting an unknown explosion occurred at eight o’clock Greenwich Mean time last night. The explosion killed sixty thousand people who were there for a concert.” Harry was explaining to the group.

“Is there any proof that Voldemort had anything to do with it?” Arthur asked nervously.

“The muggles describe a scull mark left on one of the walls, and a video camera filmed an old man dressed in black robes. Ron dispatched all the muggle born Dark Aurors to investigate, we really won’t know for sure until about dinner time.” Harry said sadly.

“If this turns out to be Voldemort’s work, it will be the single biggest atrocity he has ever committed.” Dumbledore said.

“But why would he go after muggles?” Ron asked confused.

“Attention. He is being constantly defeated in the wizarding world, so he’s turning his attention to the muggle world.” Dumbledore answered.

“We can’t protect them.” Harry said quietly.

"No Harry, we can't." Dumbledore agreed.

"Then what do we do? We can't allow him to go around killing muggles just to spite us." Arthur said.

"We need to tag him." Harry said more to himself than to the rest.

"Tag him," Arthur asked.

"Yes sir, tag him. We need to give him something we could enchant so that we can know where he is at all times." Harry explained.

"But what, and how?" Arthur asked.

"We need Hermione." Ron added.

"Get her please Ron." Dumbledore commanded.

Ron left the war room in search of Hermione.

When they returned they found the other three sitting calmly discussing the plan.

"I told Hermione what we know." Ron said, sitting down to join them.

"What do you think Hermione?" Arthur asked.

"Well Minister, I think I may have an answer, if we let it be known that Hogwarts has the most magical ring in existence, I think he may ask Severus to steal it for him." Hermione said.

"Power isn't enough, there has to be a better reason." Dumbledore added.

"Slytherin," Harry added.

"What's that Harry?" Dumbledore asked.

"We let him find out it was Salazar Slytherin's ring, he's Salazar's heir, he would want it for himself, and not just want it, he would wear it." Harry explained.

"I like it Harry, now how do we let him find out?" Arthur asked.

"Percy," Harry said simply.

"You don't think Percy's spying for Riddle, do you?" Hermione asked.

"No I don't, at least not willingly. He is wearing a necklace that shows Riddle everything that's happening around Percy." Harry said matter-of-factly.

"How do you know this?" Dumbledore asked.

"The castle told me." Harry said.

"The castle told you?" Ron asked.

"This castle was built entirely of magic; my magic, I put in a lot of myself, and it's alive as any thing ever could be. It picked up on the magic being transmitted from the castle to Riddle, which is why I changed my story last night." Harry explained.

"Then Riddle knows you're alive." Hermione stated the obvious.

"Yes Hermione, he knows, but more importantly, he knows Severus isn't on his side. We need to disconnect him from Riddle." Harry said.

"We can't Harry, he's connected by the dark mark." Dumbledore explained.

"He can be, I can remove the dark mark, and I have done it before." Harry argued.

"Another timeline Harry," Hermione asked.

"Yes, and we need to do it today." Harry pressed.

"Very well Harry, but only Severus can give you permission." Dumbledore said.

"But then how is Riddle going to get the ring?" Hermione asked.

“He’s going to steal it from the Ministry.” Arthur answered. “We’re going to discuss it later that Hogwarts is no longer safe for the ring, and we’re moving it to the Department of Mysteries before the New Year.” Arthur explained.

“Excellent, then let’s get the ball rolling.” Dumbledore said motioning for the rest to follow.

Harry went straight to Snape’s room, when he knocked, he was greeted by an inviting Snape.

“Harry, come in, what can I do for you?” He asked pleasantly.

“I need to talk to you Severus.” Harry said, sitting on the couch in Snape’s room.

“What’s happened?” Snape knew immediately by the look on his face.

Harry went straight in to the events of the night before, of Percy’s necklace, and of Voldemort knowing Snape was not on his side.

“So what brings you here? You could have sent anyone to tell me this.” Snape said.

“I want your permission to remove the dark mark.” Harry said purposefully.

“It can’t be removed Harry.” Snape said emphatically.

“I can, I’ve done it before. When Riddle gave you that mark, he gave you some of his power; I have to do the same to remove it. It only takes a moment, and there is no pain involved, but it has to be your decision.” Harry explained.

“Any side effects,” Snape asked.

“Yes, much of the hatred that’s inside you will be gone.” Harry said.

“Then do it.” Snape commanded.



Harry placed one end of his wand on the dark mark and the other on himself. Harry mumbled an inaudible spell, and the effect was instantaneous, Snape's face softened, his heart felt light, he felt free.

"Harry, I feel great, I feel like singing." Snape said happily.

"Please spare me the song Severus." Harry said smiling.

Snape did something then that Harry would never forget, he laughed. Not a sinister evil laugh, but a jovial, belly laugh. Severus Snape was free of Voldemort.

Harry had instructed his jeweler from the mainland to construct a silver serpent ring with red eyes and a large green stone in the middle. He further instructed him to make sure it looked ancient, and to add scratches here and there. If the jeweler found these instructions peculiar, he didn't show it, he went right to work and promised the ring in forty eight hours.

Harry gathered all the men in the dining hall, except Draco who still hadn't returned with his new girlfriend. Harry took it upon himself to bring up the concerns about Salazar Slytherin's ring.

"With Riddle getting so bold, we should move the ring from Hogwarts." Harry was saying to Arthur.

"What ring," Percy asked.

"Salazar Slytherin's ring, it's said that the wearer would be invulnerable to any Hogwarts descendants, including Harry who as you know is Gryffindor's descendant." Arthur explained to the group.

"How about the Ministry dad," Ron asked.

"Yes Arthur, we could use the Department of Mysteries, Voldemort won't be able to find it there and the students would be safe." Dumbledore added.

"Very well, but I caution you all," he looked at Harry, Ron and Neville, "do not go looking for it later, I intend to hide it quite well." Arthur warned.

“And don’t tell us where, we don’t want it to slip out.” Harry said looking at Ron.

“Then it’s settled, we’ll move it in two days, I’ll have members from the Order escort it to the Ministry via the floo network.” Dumbledore said.

“But won’t that only lead them to the main entrance?” Ron asked on cue.

“Yes, but there shouldn’t be any problems at the Ministry, no one knows were doing this.” Dumbledore explained.

“What about guards at the ministry?” Lee asked.

“No guards, it’ll draw too much attention to the area.” Arthur answered.

The rest of the afternoon passed with them discussing insignificant dealings of the DME and the Order. Ron at one point exited the room, and returned moments later.

“Its official, the attack was Voldemort.” Ron said, handing his father the report from the field.

“The muggle video camera does reveal Voldemort, and the dark mark was on one of the walls.” Arthur explained.

“We’ll have to worry about this later; it’s almost time to dress for the wedding.” Dumbledore said standing.

Harry was dressed and sitting at his desk in the library half an hour later. He looked up only when he heard someone enter.

“Draco,” Harry greeted his friend.

“Harry, I’d like you to meet my girlfriend Rebecca Morse.” Draco said presenting his date to Harry.

“It is an absolute honor.” Harry said kissing her hand.

“Is this castle really yours?” She asked astounded.

"It is; I built it myself." Harry answered politely.

"It must have taken years." Rebecca stated.

"No only a few days, don't forget this is the wizarding world." Harry said smiling.

"Oh yeah, I forgot." She said sheepishly.

"Has Draco informed you of the various creatures that exist in our world?" Harry asked.

"No, not really," she said.

"First I need you to meet my servants, they are what we call house elves. They are small elf creatures that serve wizards in a variety of duties." Harry explained.

"I guess you must have some." She stated in an obvious tone.

"Indeed." He said, turning to the empty room. "Dobby, come here please." He said.

Dobby appeared instantly.

"Dobby, this is our guest, Rebecca Morse. Rebecca, this is one of my best friends, and head elf, Dobby." He introduced them.

She stood in wonder as the little creature reached out his hand.

"Please to meet you miss." Dobby said, beaming from being called one of Harry's best friends.

She shook his hand apprehensively, and then smiled. "Please to meet you too Dobby." She finally said. The elf nodded, and popped away.

"There is only one other creature you'll meet today, he's a half giant, half wizard, but that won't be until later." Harry explained.

They sat and engaged in normal conversation. Rebecca admitted she was not planning on attending because several acquaintances had

died in the accident at Wembley Stadium. Harry assured her that here she would forget about the problems of the outside world.

Soon those who hadn't boarded with the bride were due to leave. Harry led the remaining residents and guest through the secret exit that lead to the dock where the Lady Molly was berthed.

Once they all boarded, Harry ordered the makeshift crew of house elves to set sail. As soon as they were far enough away, Harry dressed in robes of fine white linen, that Ginny designed and instructed all to take their places.

Harry used the spell he had been practicing that morning and the vessel began to float in the air. He waited until it was a mile above sea level before instructing an elf to play the wedding march on the organ he had conjured.

The first to make her way out was Cindy; Harry smiled when he recalled how beautiful she looked for his wedding. If it were possible, Harry could have sworn she was even more beautiful now.

When all the brides' maids had lined the aisle, Peggy made her way out. She was wearing, what Harry knew was a Ginny original gown, and magical sparkles hovered over her head. She looked just like Ginny did, absolutely stunning.

"You're a lucky man Severus." Harry whispered as the bride made her way down the aisle.

"And I owe it all to you Harry." Severus whispered back.

Peggy looked around, and it had finally dawned on her that they weren't on the water, they were floating. The stars seemed clearer, and they were too numerous to count.

When she had finally made her way to her groom, Harry began his speech.

"Dearest friends and family, we are gathered here tonight to bare witness to the union of Severus Snape and Margaret Weasley. Theirs is a fairytale story of love at first sight, but it took many years, and

many miles before these two found each other again. It is with the greatest honor that I now preside over their union. If there is any among you, and I caution you, neither Severus nor I will be happy, who feel these two should not be wed, please speak now or forever hold your peace." No one spoke. "Do you have the ring?" Harry asked Snape, he nodded. "Please place the ring on her finger, do you; Severus Snape take Margaret Weasley to be your lawfully wedded wife, to have and to hold, for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health, from this day forward, as long as you both shall live." Harry waited for Snape to answer.

"I do." Snape answered.

"Now Peggy, do you have the ring?" Harry asked and Peggy nodded. "Please place the ring on his finger, do you; Margaret Weasley take Severus Snape to be your lawfully wedded husband, to have and to hold, for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health, from this day forward, as long as you both shall live." Harry waited again.

"I do." Peggy answered.

"Then by the power vested in me, by maritime law, I now pronounce you man and wife, you may kiss the bride." Harry said, waiting for Severus to finish. "What God has brought together let no man put asunder. Ladies and gentlemen, I give you Mr. and Mrs. Severus Snape." Harry finished to tumultuous applause.

The party lasted well into the night, everyone kept commenting how beautiful the ceremony was, how ingenious Harry was for holding it in the air under a blanket of stars.

When the time for gifts arrived, Harry had the entire wedding party on the deck of the Lady Molly, to watch them open the gifts. The gifts were varied, but considering most everyone present earned a good living, they were quite expensive. But the thing on everybody's mind, and the one gift they were waiting on, was Harry's.

"Well Harry, let's see how generous you really are." Arthur joked as Peggy picked up the envelope from Harry.

She opened it slowly to tease the audience that waited with baited breath.

"There are two envelopes in here." Peggy said. "One addressed to me, and one addressed to Severus." She held onto hers, and gave Severus his, and they opened them together.

"Ok Peggy, spill it, what did my husband and I give you?" Ginny asked.

Peggy just sat quietly, until Snape whispered in her ear. "He gave us Cindylund." She said stunned. "Harry, we can't accept this." She said with a stunned expression.

"Of course you can, you both need a place to live, and other than Potter Castle, that's the next safest place.

"Ok brother-in-law, you next," Ginny said smiling.

Snape opened his envelope. "You're standing on it." He said simply.

"What?" Arthur asked.

"The Lady Molly, he gave me his sailing yacht." Severus clarified.

"Thank you Harry, both the gifts are perfect, well thought out, and very personal." Snape said, hugging Harry.

"Thank you Harry." Peggy said, kissing him lightly on the lips.

"Hey, what about me," Ginny asked in a mock hurt tone.

The bride and groom hugged and kissed her as well.

When the night ended, and the entire wedding party was back on shore, Harry handed Snape the keys to the boat.

"I can't think of a better honeymoon than out on the open sea." Harry hinted.

"We'll need to pack first Severus." Peggy pointed out to her husband.

"I've already taken the liberty." Harry said motioning to Dobby and Winky who were standing next to him with two packed trunks.

"You are amazing Harry Potter." Peggy said, kissing him again.

"Then we're off on our honeymoon." Snape announced.

Everyone said their good byes to the happy couple and retired to the library of the castle.

"I think it's way passed your bed time young lady." Molly said to Cindy.

"Do I have to go to bed?" Cindy whined.

"Yes you do," Harry added.

Cindy went off to bed while the rest remained in the library.

"That was a beautiful ceremony Harry, you should be proud of yourself." Arthur said.

"You thought of everything." Molly agreed.

"And what did you think Rebecca?" Ginny asked.

"I'm going to be pinching myself in the morning to make sure this wasn't a dream." She answered making everyone laugh.

The plan went as expected, Voldemort sent his Death Eaters to steal the fake Salazar Slytherin ring. To keep up the façade, Tonks killed two of the Death Eaters, and allowed several curses to make it through her defenses. Harry kept a constant vigil over where Voldemort was and when he made even the slightest move.

The New Years celebration came and went; it was soon time to return to school. Rebecca went home happier than Draco had ever seen her with the promise that she could return during the Easter holiday.

Draco and Hermione decided to meet the Hogwarts Express at Hogsmeade Station on the first day of the new term. Draco was actually going out of his way to meet Crabbe and Goyle; he needed to tell someone about his new girlfriend and knew the other Slytherins

wouldn't understand. Hermione on the other hand was meeting Crabbe and Goyle for an entirely different reason; they were to receive added training to assist them in their N.E.W.T. preparations.

When the train pulled into Hogsmeade station, Crabbe and Goyle emerged with not one but two trunks each.

"Packing light these days' boys," Hermione said sarcastically.

"We were kicked out." Crabbe said.

"Kicked out, by whom?" Hermione asked aghast.

"Our mothers," Goyle said.

"Why?" Draco asked.

"Because we sided against Voldemort," Goyle explained.

"They don't want us to ever come home." Crabbe agreed.

"Don't worry boys, I know a place you'll always be welcome after you leave Hogwarts, right Draco?" Hermione said turning to Draco.

"Absolutely, and you'll always be treated well." Draco added.

"Where," Crabbe and Goyle asked together.

"That's a secret for now; relax; we always take care of our friends." Hermione said emphatically.

They began walking to the carriages.

"Boys, I wanted to tell you, we're devising a strategy to help you both on your N.E.W.T.'s." Hermione told them.

"More studying," Goyle asked.

"Now Gregory, you know you need this and besides, what else do you have to do?" Hermione asked logically.

"That's true," Crabbe added.



The first few weeks of school proceeded with little or no Death Eater attacks. Voldemort was obviously planning something big, and the best the DME could gather was that it was due to happen soon.

Hermione had all of the seventh year Dark Aurors studying well into the night; she even sought permission from Dumbledore to accomplish this. The only ones that seemed to match her thirst for studying were the Ravenclaws, but even after three weeks of constant work, they were getting rebellious.

Ginny seemed to be the only one having a good time, being a sixth year, she only had her end of the year exams and her magic had evolved way passed. She would go home each and every night to her family at Potter Castle; she would then inform her fellow Dark Aurors of any important information.

Minister Weasley had enacted many laws protecting the Dark Aurors and the DME, the most crucial of these was the creation of a Minister for Dark Magic Enforcement. Minister Weasley told the press at large that the position would be filled at the end of the school year, to give the seventh year Hogwarts students the opportunity to apply for the position.

On the first of February, the Daily Prophet ran an article about the proposal for a Harry Potter Memorial that would stand near the front entrance of Hogwarts. Letters were pouring into the Ministry and the Daily Prophet written by witches and wizards who were pledging money to help defray the cost of the memorial.

Harry and Arthur enjoyed reading these letters immensely, they knew all this added publicity would make their trap that much more effective.

Harry called together the principle conspirators in his plan to defeat Voldemort, Albus, Arthur and Percy, but included others so as to not arouse suspicion. Only a select few knew the trap was set for the equinox, but the conspirators kept up the façade of the solstice.

“We have finally decided on a time and place for Riddle’s trap.” Harry was telling the group. “It will be held on the solstice in the Ministry. We will lure him by letting word get out that we have the Sword of

Slytherin, he would not want to miss the opportunity to acquire it.” Harry said.

“But do you think he’ll show up, or send his Death Eaters?” Severus asked.

“He’ll come personally, because Arthur himself will be taking it to the Ministry and Riddle won’t want to miss such a golden opportunity.” Harry explained.

“Brilliant Harry,” Dumbledore exclaimed.

“Our only problem is waiting so long,” Neville said unaware of the true plan.

“If we have to wait, then we have to wait. The solstice is when he’ll be at his weakest; we cannot miss such an opportunity.” Arthur said.

“Then it’s settled, June 21st it is.” Dumbledore said standing.

The plan was set in motion, the trap was set, and now all they could do was wait.

The morning of the 14th of February Harry received an urgent message from Dumbledore. He had heard that Death Eaters were going to attack Diagon Alley. Harry informed Ron who immediately dispatched the bulk of the Dark Auror members to Diagon Alley. Ron was also wise enough to leave all the Hogwarts Dark Aurors at the school incase it was all a ruse.

Hiding along the streets and stores of Diagon Alley, one hundred and seventeen Dark Aurors waited, waiting for the moment when their skills would be needed. Harry stayed in his war room watching to see if Riddle made an appearance.

Exactly at noon that day, more than a hundred Dementors appeared in Diagon Alley. They spread across the narrow store lined streets like locusts. Dark Aurors were popping out of storefronts and back alleys sending patronuses in every direction. The more experienced Dark Aurors were using killing curses to destroy the Dementors once and for all.

The battle lasted hours, Dementors attempted to kiss anyone who got within two meters, but when the clock struck four, the last of the Dementors died. They were finally all destroyed, a true victory for the DME.

Tonks, who was the highest ranking field officer, was overseeing the disposal of the Dementors when she received an extremely urgent message from Dumbledore.

“Beaubatons and Durmstrang have been attacked, send all available Dark Aurors.” Dumbledore had said.

## Chapter 10

Tonks immediately dispatched the Dark Aurors to Beaubatons and Durmstrang; she personally led the group headed for Beaubatons. When she arrived, the sight that met her eyes made her sick. Beaubaton students were laid out in the front garden; dead. Tonks collapsed on the floor vomiting, she couldn't raise the strength to stand and perform her duties.

After several minutes she felt a hand on her shoulder, when she looked up, she saw Dumbledore staring back at her. She stood with his help and she hugged him tightly.

"Oh Albus, it's tragic, they're all dead." She cried.

Dumbledore continued to sooth Tonks until Neville arrived with the final death toll.

"Professor, I have the final numbers." Neville said in a low voice.

"Tonks, I think you should head back to the castle and wait." Dumbledore told her.

"No, I'm a Dark Auror, I'm staying." Tonks argued.

Dumbledore looked at Neville pleadingly, Neville understood.

"Tonks, I order you to return to the castle." Neville commanded. Tonks followed his orders without question.

"What are the numbers?" Dumbledore asked as soon as Tonks had apparated away.

"Four hundred students and all thirty teachers and administrators dead here at Beaubatons, another six hundred and fifty four students and eighteen teachers dead at Durmstrang," Neville said downheartedly.

"And the injured," Dumbledore asked.

“One hundred seven seriously injured students at Beaubatons and seventy seven seriously injured at Durmstrang. Neville answered.

“Do Arthur and Harry know the numbers?” Dumbledore asked.

“Yes sir, they received copies fifteen minutes ago.” Neville said.

“I’ll be going to the Ministry now, make sure everybody knows Ron’s in charge, tell him the victim’s families have to be notified, as well as the survivor’s families.” Dumbledore instructed before apparating away.

Neville sought out Ron as he was told. Ron was walking around barking out orders to the Dark Aurors as well as the British and French Ministry members.

“Where’s Hermione?” Neville asked.

“I sent her to my dad’s office to represent the DME.” Ron said emotionlessly.

“Who is this?” Neville asked referring to the young girl who seemed attached to Ron’s hip.

“This is Gabrielle Delacour, Fleur’s sister.” Ron said smiling at her.

She gave a weak smile back to him.

“Hello, I’m Neville.” Neville introduced himself.

“Hello.” She said in a heavily French accented voice.

“Dumbledore wanted me to tell you to make sure the families are notified.” Neville said quietly.

“Taken care of, both the families from the dead and the living,” Ron said shortly.

“What are they going to do?” Neville asked, staring at all the injured Beaubaton students.

“They’re going to go on. They’re going to wake up each day, go through their regular routine, and go to bed at night, because that’s all they can do, it’s all any of us can do.” Ron said on the brink of tears.

Back at the Ministry, Arthur Weasley, Albus Dumbledore, Hermione Granger, the French Minister Jacques Dubois and the new Romanian Minister Nikita Romanoff were meeting in Arthur’s office.

“It is all your fault, this Voldemort of yours, if you would have killed him, this would never have happened.” Romanoff was yelling.

“Yez it iz true, iv you vould hav kilt ‘im, thos children vould have been safe.” Dubois agreed.

“Now gentlemen, you can’t go around pointing fingers, we have to pull together to help those that survived.” Arthur argued.

“Yes Ministers, Arthur is right, we have to consider the children.” Dumbledore agreed.

“What are they goin’ to do?” Romanoff asked.

“Can’t we incorporate them into Hogwarts?” Hermione asked.

“Who iz diz little girl, vhy doz she speak to uz?” Dubois asked sanctimoniously.

“I am General Granger of the Department of Dark Magic Enforcement.” Hermione said proudly, drawing herself up to full height.

“Ha, no wonder you can’t kill one man.” Romanoff said disgustedly.

“Silence!” A voice rumbled the very building on which they stood.

Harry materialized in front of the Romanian Minister, his yellow eyes glowed brighter than ever before; the look on his face was enough to scare the devil himself. Hermione, Arthur and Albus could all feel the magic and his anger radiating from him, they found it so intense they actually took two steps back.

“Don’t you dare speak to her in such a manner!” Harry yelled, again making the building rumble as he began floating upward.

“You, you are dead.” Romanoff said backing away.

“How dare you stand there and point fingers and speak condescendingly to the very people who are trying to help you. CHILDREN ARE DEAD! Get your heads out of your arses and pay attention. General Granger is MY representative, you WILL treat her with the greatest respect, and you WILL heed her suggestions, or you WILL answer to me.” Harry yelled, causing the building to shake violently.

“Harry please relax, the Ministers are just as upset as you are.” Arthur said trying to defuse the situation.

“No Arthur, I will NOT relax, not today, not tomorrow, not ever. These two men WILL heed ME or they will face me in battle.” Harry said, challenging the two Ministers.

“Harry no,” Dumbledore said, realizing what Harry was doing.

“I will strike you down boy.” Romanoff said.

Romanoff drew his wand and pointed it at Harry. Harry’s eyes grew even more yellow, and Romanoff began to scream. He screamed louder than if the cruciatus curse was being inflicted. While he was screaming, Harry turned to Dubois, the French Minister just dropped to one knee to show his submission. Harry released Romanoff.

“Do you submit to my authority?” Harry asked in a voice colder than even Voldemort could muster.

“I submit.” The Romanian Minister said.

“General Granger, I think you shall find the Ministers more receptive to you now.” Harry said, vanishing away.

“I am zorry General, I vill listen.” Dubois said.

“I am sorry also, please speak.” Romanoff added.

Hermione went on to explain her idea.

“Well, since there are only one hundred and eighty students, we can place them in a comparable year in Hogwarts. The Dark Auror students can supplement the staff, and the students of Beaubatons and Durmstrang can try to get on with their lives.” Hermione suggested.

“Yes, I was about to make the same suggestion. The Dark Aurors who are still in school would make excellent teachers, and our security force on the street would not be affected.” Dumbledore agreed.

“I accept your gracious offer.” Romanoff said.

“Me alzo,” Dubois agreed.

“Then it’s settled, we’ll incorporate the Beaubaton and Durmstrang students into Hogwarts for the remainder of the school year.” Arthur finalized.

“Minister Weasley, I would like to apologize for my harsh words and actions, they were uncalled for.” Romanoff said bowing.

“I vould alzo apologize, I am French, I should act better.” Dubois agreed.

“Jacque, Nikita, if you need anything, please call.” Arthur said.

“Ve vill Arthur, thank you.” Jacques said.

As soon as they were gone, Hermione turned to Dumbledore.

“What the hell just happened with Harry?” Hermione asked.

“Harry used their old world ways against them, he challenged them to either accept his orders or fight, and well you saw what happened.” Dumbledore explained.

“Both Jacques and Nikita were trained in the old ways, if anyone challenges you, you either accept or yield, the former yielded and the



latter accepted. Harry is very well read, not even I would have thought of such a strategy.” Arthur said impressed.

“Should we be worried about them?” Hermione asked.

“No, they now owe a life debt to Harry and since Harry can always defend himself, I don’t see them ever paying that debt.” Dumbledore answered.

“I’m starting a war council; I want the both of you, Ron, Sirius and Severus to meet me in Harry’s castle at eight o’clock tonight, the war begins tonight.” Arthur said sounding more resolute than either one of them had ever heard.

Both Albus and Hermione apparated to the Beaubatons school to see if they needed any help.

“Did you see Harry’s eyes?” Hermione asked as she walked with Dumbledore.

“I did indeed Hermione.” Dumbledore said simply.

“Did they make you as nervous as they did me?” Hermione pressed.

“No, I am slightly concerned for Harry, but he’s still Harry and he’ll always do the right thing.” Dumbledore explained.

“Did you feel his magic?” Hermione continued.

“I don’t think there was a wizard or witch in that entire building who didn’t feel his magic.” Dumbledore answered.

“What do think it means?” Hermione finally asked.

“It means Harry IS the most powerful wizard in the world.” Dumbledore said simply.

Hermione and Dumbledore found Ron sitting on the grass with a very attractive third year Beaubatons student.

“Miss Delacour, it is nice to see you again.” Dumbledore said smiling.

"Hello Profesor, it iz nize to zee you too," Gabrielle said smiling.

"How are you feeling Gabrielle?" Hermione asked concernedly.

"Vad, my parentz are dead, zey ver teecherz." She answered, breaking down and crying for what appeared to be the tenth time. Hermione hugged her tightly.

"Where is Fleur?" Hermione asked Ron.

"Stuck at the front gates with all the other families, they won't let anybody in until the mess is cleaned up." Ron said sadly.

"Ron, I'm going to take Gabrielle back to the castle, she needs care and rest, when Fleur arrives, bring her too, I'm sure the master of the castle won't mind." Hermione said; Ron just waved his hand in the air in response, Hermione and Gabrielle apparated away.

Hermione apparated to a bedroom she knew was unused and called for Winky.

"Yes Miss General Ma'am." Winky said popping in.

"This is Gabrielle; she needs care and rest, please see to it and when she's better, escort her down to the library." Hermione commanded.

"Right away Miss General Ma'am," Winky said popping out to get the required medication and food.

"Gabrielle, I'm just going to lay you down on the bed, as soon as you're feeling better, Winky will show you down." Hermione explained; Gabrielle just nodded.

Hermione went down to the library in search of Harry. She found him sitting at his desk with Ginny standing next to him; she could still feel the magic radiating from him.

"Am I going to get a lecture on proper Ministry etiquette?" Harry asked, without even looking up.

"No, I will say you scared me half to death, but apparently you knew what you were doing." Hermione said sitting down.

"What did you do Harry?" Ginny asked.

"I dueled the Romanian Minister of Magic." Harry answered calmly.

"And made the French Minister of Magic bow before you," Hermione added.

"You didn't Harry," Ginny asked concernedly.

"I did, but it was for a reason, a very good reason." Harry said.

"And what could that reason possible be?" Ginny asked indignantly.

"They disrespected me in my capacity as General of the DME." Hermione answered.

"That and they were more concerned with assigning blame than helping those poor students who now have to live with the horror they were exposed to." Harry added.

"With all do respect to the General, whether or not they treat you with respect really doesn't mean anything to me, but failing to help those poor students, I'm sure Harry was too soft on them." Ginny said emphatically.

Harry smiled at his wife's brazenness.

"Harry, Arthur is starting a war council, he wants to meet with you, me, Ron, Dumbledore, Sirius and Snape tonight at eight." Hermione relayed the message.

"In the war room I suppose." Harry said distractedly.

"We have a war room? Why haven't I ever seen it?" Ginny asked confused.

"I like to keep it secret; it's where I monitor Dark activity." Harry said, still distracted.

The war council assembled in Harry's war room. Arthur stood to address the group.

"It is starting," Arthur began with a bite in his voice. "Voldemort is starting to attack defended sites." Arthur said angrily.

"He is getting smarter, he used the Dementors to distract the Dark Aurors so by the time we arrived, the fight was over." Dumbledore added.

"He's a coward," Harry growled. "He's attacking places we can't or don't defend. He won't face us directly, he won't face us at all, he's still using Death Eaters." Harry spat.

"How do you know he wasn't at Beaubatons or Durmstrang?" Ron asked.

"The tag, he never left his hideout." Harry answered.

Dumbledore was eyeing Harry very closely; he could still feel the magic emanating from him, but said nothing to the group.

"Harry, you have to calm down, we lost this battle, but we will win the war." Dumbledore attempted to calm him down.

"Calm down Albus? I will not calm down, not until that monster has been dead and buried for a year. I should have attacked him while the Death Eaters were attacking the schools." Harry growled at Dumbledore.

"You can't attack him while he's in his lair; you'll loose." Dumbledore argued.

Harry just stared at Dumbledore, the anger evident on his face.

"What do we do now, how can we protect everybody?" Ron asked.

"We can't protect everybody, we have to face up to that, and as far as what we do now, we continue doing what we have been doing, watching and reacting." Arthur told his son.

"When does Remus return from South America?" Arthur asked Dumbledore.

"Next week if all goes well." Dumbledore said.

"Then we should put this meeting off until then, hopefully Remus will return with reinforcements." Arthur said turning towards the door.

Harry waited for Arthur, Albus, Sirius and Severus to leave before he spoke again.

"Ron, how many Dark Aurors do you have outside of Hogwarts?" Harry asked emotionlessly.

"We're up to three hundred fifteen fully trained Dark Aurors and another seventy six semi-trained Dark Aurors." Ron answered.

"How many do you typically spare for Quidditch matches?" Harry asked.

"Usually five per game," Ron said.

"You may want to put fifty in the stands per game, make sure their uniforms are covered by regular cloaks so nobody will recognize them, pull the visible ones out so Riddle gets the impression we're fortifying our positions. Limit the regular patrols of Dark Aurors to teams of two, and supplement them with three teams of two each, in disguise. You have to make it look like we're spreading ourselves too thin." Harry instructed him.

"You want him to attack, don't you?" Ron asked.

"No, but I suspect he'll go for the Quidditch matches next, and if we make it appear that much easier, he'll do it sooner than later, and we can control the outcome." Harry explained, still showing no emotion.

"What are you going to do Harry?" Hermione asked him.

"What Arthur said, wait and react." Harry answered shortly.

Harry exited the war room and found Ginny sitting on one of the large sofas. He sat down next to her while Hermione sat across and Ron went into the kitchen to eat.

"Are you all right Harry?" Ginny asked very concerned.

"I'm getting better." Harry answered.

"Maybe this will help." Ginny said, kissing Harry with all her heart and soul, Harry returned in kind.

"Whoa," Hermione exclaimed.

"Yeah, he is a good kisser." Ginny said as Harry followed Ron into the kitchens.

"That's not what I meant." Hermione said to Ginny.

"Oh, you can feel it too?" Ginny surmised.

"I've been feeling his magic whenever he's angry, but that time I just felt how much he loved you, it was so intense I almost cried." Hermione said as tears were welling up.

"I know, I feel it too, but if you really want a good cry, wait 'til he's playing with Cindy, now that's true love." Ginny said smiling.

Harry walked into the kitchen to find Ron talking to a very young girl he barely recognized.

"Gabrielle, it that you," Harry asked smiling.

"Harry, my zaviour." Gabrielle said running over to hug Harry. "I heard you had died, but I didn't believe it." Gabrielle said happily.

"Harry, Gabrielle and Fleur lost their parents during the attack, they were teachers." Ron explained.

"Oh Gabrielle I'm so sorry, where is Fleur?" He asked her hoping to take her mind off the disaster.

"She iz coming zoon." Gabrielle said, still hugging Harry.

"I left her with Neville at Beaubatons; she needed to identify the bod... I mean her parents." Ron quickly corrected himself.

"Well Gabrielle, you're welcome to stay as long as you like." Harry said, kissing her on the top of her head.

"Iz diz your caztle?" Gabrielle asked.

"Yes Gabrielle it is, and you and Fleur can stay as long as you like, but you cannot say anything about me being alive, I want people to continue to think I am dead." Harry explained to her.

"Vhy?" She asked.

"I have my reasons, please don't say anything." Harry pressed.

"I von't zay anything." Gabrielle promised.

Harry grabbed himself a snack and told Ron; when Fleur arrived to send her to the library.

When Harry arrived back to the library, he found Ginny and Hermione talking happily as if nothing had happened all day, it actually made him smile.

"You guys seem relaxed." Harry stated.

"And you're much better than you were." Hermione observed back.

"And how do you know that?" Harry asked while sitting across from them.

"Because I can feel it," Hermione answered absentmindedly.

"You can what?" Harry asked confused.

"Harry," Ginny began. "Recently, whenever you have strong emotions, love, hate, anger or anything, you emanate magic; it lets everyone in the area know exactly what you're feeling." Ginny explained.

“When you were with the Ministers earlier today, I could feel all the magic emanating from you, you were so powerful, I actually got scared.” Hermione added.

“And you can sense my emotions?” Harry asked.

“Yeah, you were so angry; I actually thought you were going to kill them.” Hermione answered.

“Interesting,” was the only thing Harry said.

“Harry,” Fleur exclaimed.

“Fleur, how are you?” Harry said in French.

“Harry, you spoke French to me.” She answered back in French.

“I have learned the language, and speak it fluently.” Harry said to her, still speaking French.

“And I have learned your language as well.” Fleur said, reverting to English.

“And you speak it so well.” Harry said taking Fleur in an embrace.

“I’m so sorry for your loss.” Harry said to her softly.

“We all are.” Hermione added.

“Fleur, you remember one of my very best friends, Hermione,” Harry said, motioning to Hermione. Fleur shook her hand. “This is my wife Ginny,” Harry added.

“Your wife, you are married?” Fleur asked disbelievingly.

“Yes I am, very happily married.” Harry corrected smiling.

“I am very pleased to meet you. If Harry took you as his wife, you must be a very special person.” Fleur said to Ginny in perfect English.

“So where have you been these last three years?” Harry asked, motioning her to sit.



"I've been teaching in a private school in London." She said.

"I think you might have learned more than you taught." Harry said laughing.

"I think you're right." Fleur agreed laughing as well. "When I heard the great Harry Potter had been killed, I told Gabrielle that it was a lie, Harry Potter is a great wizard, this Voldemort cannot kill him." She said honestly.

"Thank you Fleur, but if you don't mind, don't tell anybody I'm alive." Harry said seriously.

"I know, Gabrielle told me. She also told me she could stay as long as she liked." Fleur said, looking pleadingly into Harry's eyes.

"That's right, she's free to stay here as long as she likes, and if she likes and it's ok with you, she can live here indefinitely; my castle is her castle." Harry said warmly.

"Oh thank you Harry, Gabrielle needs to feel safe, and with you everybody feels safe." She said appreciatively.

"You do know she will be attending Hogwarts?" Hermione asked.

"Oh yes, the Dark Aurors told me in France, but I would like her to feel safe outside of school and I can't give her that if I am working." She answered.

"Don't worry, Harry is a fully qualified wizard, if Gabrielle is still too nervous, Harry can train her here." Ginny said, placing an arm on Fleur.

"Really Harry, you can do this." Fleur said pleadingly.

"Yes Fleur, but I recommend Hogwarts, many of her school friends will be attending. But if she decides she wants to sleep here to feel safe, she can come home with Ginny every night." Harry explained.

"Yes, I think she would love that idea, I will go talk to her." Fleur said excitedly, kissing Harry, Ginny and Hermione on each cheek and rushing off.

The morning that classes resumed, Ginny escorted Gabrielle into the great hall for breakfast. The surviving Beaubatons and Durmstrang students were scattered sporadically across the four house tables. Ginny noticed they all had one thing in common, the same somber expression.

"Students, may I have your attention," Dumbledore began. "I'm sure you all know why our numbers have increased this morning, I hope you will all treat our guests with warmth and respect; the class schedules have been changed to accommodate our guests so please see your prefects for your new schedule." He said sitting back down.

Ron and Hermione were given the student's schedules and they in turn passed them to the house prefects. They were also given teaching schedules for the Dark Aurors to supplement the staff.

"The school day has been extended by two hours." Ron said indignantly.

"Well they did include free time in the middle of the day for the students." Hermione argued.

"Yeah, but it doesn't apply to us, we have to teach." Ron continued, sounding angry.

"It'll be fun Ron, you like teaching, don't you?" Hermione asked.

"Yeah I do, but I have to teach the fifth, sixth and seventh year Durmstrangs regular Defense, I don't want them learning anything." Ron said.

"Oh relax, just teach the curriculum." Hermione said, storming off.

Ginny walked Gabrielle to her first class; potions, she stood around watching as the other Beaubatons entered the classroom. Ginny was surprised to see how few first through fourth year Beaubatons there were.

“Ginny, what are you doing here?” Charlie said, coming up behind her.

“Oh, just seeing off Gabrielle here.” She said motioning to the young girl standing next to her. “She’s staying at our castle.” Ginny added.

“Really, that’s wonderful. I’m Professor Weasley.” He introduced himself to Gabrielle.

“Hello,” she responded shyly.

“Why don’t you take a seat and I’ll be with the class in a moment.” He waited for her to enter and closed the door from the outside. “Isn’t that the girl from the Tri-wizard Tournament?” He asked Ginny.

“Yeah, her parents were teachers at Beaubatons, they died in the attack.” Ginny said sadly.

“I see Harry’s taking in another stray,” Charlie joked.

“Something like that,” Ginny said smiling.

“I’ll make sure she’s fine, don’t worry.” Charlie said kissing his sister on the cheek.

“Thanks Charlie, I’ll see you later.” She said kissing him back.

“Gabrielle spent the day going from class to class without even thinking about what she was doing. She had spent the newly added free period with Ginny as she taught transfiguration to the first through fourth year Durmstrangs; she even ate lunch with Ginny. Ginny was starting to feel she still had repressed feelings, but she knew better than to bring it up. “She’ll come around soon.” Ginny thought to herself.

That night Gabrielle would only sleep in the bedroom directly across from the master bedroom. She had claimed she was too scared to sleep anywhere else. Harry, being who he was, accommodated her happily.

The week past fairly uneventfully at Hogwarts, the new students, though an inconvenience, were getting along with the Hogwarts

students famously. In the outside world, Voldemort had kept his Death Eaters quiet. The members of the war council believed this was to reconnoiter and they would strike back with a vengeance.

Harry watched and waited.

The following week, Remus was due to return from South America. He had been sent by Dumbledore over a year before, to seek out allegiances from the various wizarding communities on the continent. Remus had not heard about Harry being alive, or married, or a father. He also had not heard about his old friend Sirius, as far as Remus was concerned, both Harry and Sirius were dead.

Dumbledore instructed Remus to meet him at the Minister's office that Friday. There they would discuss the specifics of his mission.

Remus arrived at eleven on Friday morning; he found the Minister and Dumbledore deep in conversation.

"Good morning Minister, Albus, it's good to see you both." Remus greeted them, shaking both men's hands.

"Good morning Remus, please have a seat." Arthur said, motioning to the chair next to Dumbledore.

"What news from South America?" Arthur asked.

"Well sir, I have managed to secure the aide of the Ministries in Argentina, Brazil, Peru and Chile. We have only to ask and they'll send as many wizards as they can spare." Remus said proudly.

"And how many do you suppose that would be?" Dumbledore asked.

"The Argentineans will send no less than two hundred wizards, the Brazilians and Peruvians about a hundred and fifty each, and the Chileans; about eighty." Remus read off a piece of parchment.

"Five hundred and eighty, not a bad number, did you have to make any concessions?" Arthur asked.

“None, other than if they ever need our assistance that we send as many wizards as we can spare.” Remus answered.

“Most acceptable terms, Albus, anything to add,” Arthur asked.

“Nothing Minister, I believe our meeting is concluded. Remus if you would leave the Minister your report, I must be heading to Hogwarts, gentlemen,” Albus said standing.

“Now I’m sure you would like to go home and get cleaned up and rested, I would like your presence at dinner tonight; there are other pressing matters we need to discuss.” Arthur said standing.

“Why not just discuss them here?” Remus asked.

“You’ll understand tonight. Here, on this piece of parchment I have written down the password to get you through the security in the floo network, make sure you speak clearly when you give the password, I wouldn’t want you to end up in one of our dungeons.” Arthur said laughing.

“Yes Minister, I’ll see you at seven.” Remus said respectfully and left the Minister’s office.

That afternoon, Harry had arranged for all those who knew he was alive to meet at Potter Castle for the weekend. He received permission from Arthur to destroy Percy’s necklace so that Riddle would suspect they had just discovered it.

Harry purposefully got into a discussion about the necklace Percy was wearing, and when Percy said it was an anonymous gift, Harry destroyed it. Voldemort would not know their actions, whether true or false, ever again.

That night, Remus was to apparate to the facsimile of the Burrow, and Arthur was to escort him down to dinner. Remus arrived on time as expected; Arthur greeted him at the fireplace.

“Remus, welcome, you look like a new man,” Arthur said shaking his hand.

“Arthur, thank you for having me, I don’t seem to smell dinner.” Remus said confused.

“Ah, can’t seem to fool your werewolf nose, can I?” Arthur asked laughing. “Don’t worry; dinner is being cooked in the kitchen.” Arthur said motioning to the front door and leading Remus to it.

When Arthur opened the door, Remus’ mouth dropped open.

“Where are we,” Remus asked.

“Our safe house,” Arthur said leading Remus down to the dining hall.

“It’s a castle, but definitely not Hogwarts.” Remus deduced.

“Very good, what else can you deduce?” Arthur asked amused as they continued down the corridor.

“We’re near salt water, but it doesn’t smell like the north Atlantic, maybe the south Atlantic. Judging by the sounds of the birds outside, I’d say something near tropical weather. No wait, that’s not the south Atlantic, it’s the Pacific Ocean.” Remus said, turning to Arthur.

“Excellent Remus, you are extremely talented. We are indeed in the Pacific, specifically the country of Australia, so its summer here. That’s probably why you suspected the tropical climate. Ah, here we are,” Arthur said, opening the double doors leading to the cavernous dining hall.

Remus froze in place, the room was filled with people he knew, and some he did not know. He noticed that the head of the table was unoccupied, as was the chair immediately to the left and the two to the right.

“Professor,” Hermione exclaimed as she ran over and hugged Remus tightly.

“Hermione, how many times have I told you, I’m not your professor any longer, call me Remus.” Remus said warmly. “It is good to...” Remus stopped talking, he had picked up two scents he shouldn’t have. He turned slowly around and froze.

“Harry! Sirius!”

## Chapter 11

"Hello Remus," Harry said smiling.

"I don't understand, you're both supposed to be dead." Remus said amazed, reaching over and embracing both Harry and Sirius.

"It's a long story, Mooney, we'll talk over dinner." Sirius said, hugging his friend back.

Remus sat down to Harry's left with Sirius on Remus' other side, Arthur sat at Harry's right. The entire group began the insurmountable task of explaining everything that had happened since Remus left.

"Whoa, that's too much to take in, I need a drink." Remus declared drinking from the flask he was carrying.

"What're drinking?" Sirius asked.

"The South American version of wolfsbane potion," Remus began. "If taken daily, it will keep me from becoming a werewolf." He explained.

"Is that a fact?" Snape asked with interest.

"Absolutely Severus, I haven't changed in six months." Remus stated.

"Do you know what's in it?" Snape pressed.

"No, but they gave me enough to last the entire year." Remus said smiling.

"That's excellent," Dumbledore said. "How often do you have to take it?" Dumbledore added.

"One sip every hour, ten times per day, but to keep me from becoming a monster, it's well worth it." Remus continued.

"I would say so," Arthur said.

The evening was filled with pleasant conversation and good friends. Harry felt happier than he ever remembered being. Remus was



constantly checking his watch, so much so that everybody was starting to notice.

"Are you that concerned about the potion?" Snape asked.

"Oh no Severus, I'm just very tired from all the traveling and as much as I want this night to continue, I feel I really should be getting home." Remus answered politely.

"Stay here Remus, we have plenty of room." Harry said, not wanting Remus to leave yet.

"Oh no, not tonight, tomorrow would be better for me." Remus argued.

"What's your rush Remus?" Snape asked, sounding suspicious.

"Like I said, just tired," Remus said again, opening up his flask.

"Hold on there Remus," Hermione said, stopping his hand. "Can I take a look at that?" She asked, sounding as suspicious as Snape.

"Sure, just let me take my sip; I don't like being a werewolf." He said, going to take his sip.

"Remus, put the flask down," Harry commanded, picking up on what the other two were doing.

"Harry, I have to," Remus said anxiously.

"No Remus," Sirius piped in. "You attempt to drink from that flask, and I'll put you down." Sirius said, pointing his wand at his old friend.

"What is the matter with all of you; it's just me, Remus." Remus said nervously.

Harry walked over to Remus, and took his flask and smelled it. He then, in turn, handed it to Hermione who also smelled it.

"Polyjuice potion," she said, looking at Harry.

"Who are you?" Harry asked angrily.

"Your downfall Potter," the imposter said with a growl.

"Where's Remus," Harry exclaimed.

"The werewolf, we've had him in custody for almost eight months." He said laughing.

"You seem to be in good spirits considering you've been caught." Dumbledore observed.

"That's because I've already accomplished my mission." He said, still laughing.

"And what might that be?" Arthur asked, now joining the conversation.

"Poison, I managed to poison you; Minister, you; Potter, and you; Black, within the next forty-eight hours, neither one of you will be able to move from your beds. Within two weeks, you will never regain consciousness, and in a month, you'll all be dead." He said with satisfaction.

"What did you give them?" Severus asked, running over and picking the man up by his throat.

"It's too late, I'll be dead in a moment, and you'll never find out." He said starting to laugh again.

"Oh no you don't," Severus said, pointing his wand at the imposter, but it was too late; the imposter fell to the floor dead.

"He has killed himself." Dumbledore said standing over the man.

"Why a slow working potion," Hermione asked.

"To give him time to escape," Harry answered. "And it's a good strategy." He added.

"How are you feeling," Ginny asked concernedly.

"I feel fine, but I get the strange sensation he wasn't bluffing, though." Harry said. "How about you two," Harry asked, turning to Sirius and Arthur.

They did not answer; they just swayed in place, and then fell to the floor.

Severus immediately levitated Arthur and Sirius, and directed them to one of the bedrooms. When they entered, Harry altered the room to accommodate the would be patients.

“Ginny, go to the fireplace in the other room and call my healer at St. Mungo’s.” Harry instructed her.

“Harry, your eyes are yellow,” she said nervously.

“I know, it’s a defense mechanism, please call my healer.” He pressed and she left the room.

“Will your animagus form protect you from the poison?” Hermione asked Harry in a whisper.

“No, it’ll just delay the process, I’ll collapse like Arthur and Sirius in about three to six hours and if the imposter’s information is correct, I won’t wake up for six to eight weeks and in about three to four months, I’ll be dead.” Harry said flatly.

Hermione had tears in her eyes. “You’re not serious, are you?” She asked nervously.

“Deadly serious, no pun intended.” Harry answered. “Where’s Cindy,” Harry asked.

“Molly put her to bed about two hours ago.” Hermione said in a hoarse voice.

“Hermione, I’m going to settle my affairs, please have someone watch over Arthur and Sirius twenty-four hours a day, if I’m correct, they will be waking up intermittently and will want food and drink.” Harry said to a stunned Hermione.

“Oh Harry, you didn’t mean that like I think you mean it, your not really settling your affairs?” She asked crying freely.

Harry just looked at her, and left the room. Hermione immediately reverted to her head girl persona and set up a schedule so that the two patients would always have someone watching over them, and instructed the house elves to be ready at a moments notice.

“Professor, did you manage to get the identity of the imposter?” Ron asked when Dumbledore entered the room.

“No Mr. Weasley, he died while still on the Polyjuice potion, his form will not revert back.” Dumbledore answered. “Any change in our two patients?” He asked Hermione who was sitting between Arthur’s and Sirius’ beds.

“No, but they did stir a little while ago.” Hermione answered without looking up.

Ginny came in with a witch none of them had ever seen.

“The healer is here.” Ginny announced, leading the healer to Arthur and Sirius.

The healer wasted no time; she immediately pulled out her wand and ran it over the two patients. The wand glowed yellow. She said some incantation no one heard, and a beam shot out of the wand, first to Sirius then to Arthur.

“The poison is powerful, one I have never seen or heard of, I’m not sure there is anything I can do.” She said sadly.

“Try your best madam; these are two very important people.” Dumbledore said, turning to leave.

“Wait, I think Harry knew what the poison was, I’ll go find him.” Hermione said, rushing out of the room.

She ran down to the library where Harry was sitting behind his desk.

“Harry, the healer is here?” Hermione said walking up to the desk, but Harry did not make a sound. “Harry, are you all right?” She asked.

When she touched Harry’s arm, he fell face first into his desk.

“Oh my God, Harry!” She exclaimed. When he didn’t respond she levitated his body and a piece of parchment fell on the floor. She read the parchment and proceeded to guide Harry up to the makeshift infirmary.

“Ron, Harry is unconscious,” Hermione exclaimed.

Ron helped Hermione guide his body to a bed Dumbledore conjured and the healer went right to work. She passed the wand over Harry’s body as she had done with Arthur and Sirius but this time it glowed a light blue.

“He’s not as bad as the other two, but he is just as poisoned.” She said emotionlessly.

“Harry was reading this parchment.” Hermione said, handing the healer the parchment.

She read it quickly, nodded, and handed it back to Hermione.

“Just as I feared, no known cure, the Dark Lord knew exactly what he was doing. This poison is slow acting, but most effective.” She said still displaying no emotion.

Ginny, who was standing by her father simply collapsed on the floor. The healer levitated her, conjured another bed and laid her down. She reached into her bag, pulled out a vial, and poured its contents into Ginny’s mouth.

“She’ll be fine, she just fainted.” The healer said.

“You have to do something,” Ron exclaimed.

“There is nothing I can do, just keep them comfortable and well fed, I’ll return tomorrow to check up on them.” The healer said, leaving the room.

“What are we going to do?” Hermione asked.

“We; Miss Granger, are going to spend the next few days researching a cure.” Severus said entering the room.

“Professor, this is the poison they used.” Hermione said handing Snape the parchment.

“Miss Granger, I hope you’ve slept well over the last year, because I don’t think we’ll be sleeping for quite a while.” Snape declared.

“I’ll work ‘til I drop.” Hermione responded resolutely.

“Then we must go to Hogwarts. Mr. Weasley, please ensure both Miss Granger’s and my classes are covered, we will not be attending them.” Snape told Ron.

“Consider it done Professor.” Ron said.

Snape and Hermione left the room leaving Ron alone with the now four patients. Ron sat down between Harry and Ginny.

“Don’t worry Harry, everything will be all right.” Ron said softly.

“I’m not worried mate, just sleepy.” Harry said.

“You’re awake, that’s great.” Ron exclaimed.

“Not that great Ron, I’m not getting better, just fighting it more. Could you have Winky get me something to eat, I’m hungry.” Harry asked Ron.

“Of course mate, anything.” Ron said, before calling for Winky and instructing her to get some food.

The next week Arthur and Sirius would wake for six hours and sleep for eighteen, but as the week was winding down, they were awake less and less. Snape and Hermione were spending every waking hour on finding a cure, to no avail.

During one of his cognitive times, Sirius called for Ron.

“Ron, I need a favor.” Sirius said

“Anything Sirius,” Ron responded.

“I need you to find Remus, the real Remus.” Sirius explained.

“How, I heard he was all over South America, he could be anywhere.” Ron said.

“Do what you can, but please do it quickly.” Sirius begged.

Ron, with Dumbledore’s help, sent out a dozen Dark Aurors in search of the real Remus Lupin. He ordered them in six groups of two, to travel the entire continent of South America for any clue as to where Remus might have been taken.

With the absence of Snape and Hermione, Ron was finding school to be more difficult than he ever thought possible. The impending N.E.W.T.’s made matters worse, since most of the Dark Aurors didn’t have any time to study.

“Ron,” Dean began. “We can’t keep going like this, we’re up past midnight every night, and up again at six in the morning, even our weekends are busy.” Dean said pleadingly.

“We can’t stop now; my dad is counting on us, without Snape and Hermione he may die.” Ron argued.

“But mate, can’t McGonagall give us a break, cancel the N.E.W.T.’s or something.” Semus added.

“I tried talking to her, but she won’t even consider it.” Ron said sadly.

“I don’t care what you guys are saying, if the Minister needs us to suffer, then suffer we will, because of him, we’re all fully qualified Dark Aurors.” Parvati interjected.

“Hi guys,” Hermione said, plopping down on the sofa.

“Hermione, it’s almost one in the morning.” Ron pointed out to his girlfriend.

“Yeah, and I’ve got to get up in five hours.” Hermione said with a yawn.

“This is killing you ‘Mione, you have to let up.” Ron said, massaging her shoulders.

"If you think I'm bad, you should see Severus, he's a machine." She said with a smile.

"Severus, Hermione," Parvati asked with a sly tone.

"Oh stop, he just asked me to call him that since we were no longer in a student teacher relationship, but more of a colleague relationship." Hermione said blushing.

"Colleagues, you're colleagues now?" Ron asked jealously.

"Oh Ron, stop being jealous, Severus is your brother in law for crying out loud." Hermione said, kissing Ron on the cheek.

"Brother in law? When did this happen?" Parvati asked.

"Yeah and why didn't you tell us?" Dean added.

"It slipped my mind." Ron lied.

"Which one of your sisters did Snape marry?" Parvati asked, knowing the story of his long lost sisters.

"He married Peggy, the middle sister." Hermione answered.

"Were you there?" Parvati pressed.

"Yeah, it was beautiful, it was held on a huge sailing yacht, and Harry presided..." Hermione realized what she had said and froze.

"Harry," Parvati, Dean and Semus all exclaimed together.

Hermione didn't know what to say, she had inadvertently let the proverbial cat out of the bag.

"And you used to think I would slip up." Ron said smugly.

"Leave her alone Ron, she's tired." Neville said in Hermione's defense.



“Are you saying Harry’s alive?” Parvati whispered needlessly, considering it was one in the morning and the Gryffindor common room was empty.

“Yes Parvati, Harry’s alive.” Neville answered.

“How long have you known?” Dean asked.

“Since I married Ginny,” Harry answered from behind them.

“Harry,” the three friends exclaimed again, and ran to hug him, knocking him flat on his back.

“Are you all right?” Hermione almost yelled as she ran to pick him up.

“What’s wrong with him?” Semus asked.

“He was poisoned, like my dad.” Ron said, helping Hermione get Harry to the chair.

“If Harry was poisoned like your dad, and your dad can’t wake up, then why is Harry still apparating around?” Parvati asked.

“Look at his eyes,” Hermione said simply.

“Oh my God, they’re yellow.” Parvati stated the obvious.

“I’m a griffin animagus, I’m much harder to kill when I’m partially transfigured, and so, as long as I stay semi-transfigured, the poison won’t attack my body as much.” Harry said breathlessly.

“But it’s still affecting you, isn’t it?” Dean asked.

“I’m dying Dean; at best I have a couple of months, but not much longer than that. Arthur and my godfather Sirius have less than a month. If Severus and Hermione don’t find a cure, there’s not much hope for us.” Harry explained.

“That’s a lot of pressure Hermione.” Parvati said sympathetically.

“Yeah it is, but I’ll do what I can for my best friend.” Hermione said putting her hand on Harry’s shoulder.

"No, no pressure, if I die, if Arthur and Sirius die, it will be Riddle's fault, not Severus and Hermione's. I will not accept any guilt from either of you two." Harry said emphatically.

"What are you doing out of bed?" Hermione asked him in a motherly tone.

"I was waiting to talk to Ron, but now that they all know, I don't have to wait." Harry answered.

"What do you need?" Ron asked.

"Nothing, I just wanted someone to talk to, to play chess with, I needed to clear my mind, and I knew you'd be up." Harry answered sheepishly.

"So you presided over Snape's wedding, was that his idea or hers?" Parvati asked, breaking a momentary uncomfortable silence.

"Actually it was Severus' idea. I kind of played matchmaker for those two and they picked up on it." Harry said smiling.

"You're so romantic, Ginny is so lucky." Parvati said with a hint of jealousy.

"Yes I am," Ginny answered, appearing out of nowhere.

"Hello my love." Harry said, kissing his wife.

"Hello lover, what are you doing here?" Ginny asked confused.

"I just needed to get out of my own mind, so I came looking for Ron, but I got lucky enough to run into the whole group." Harry said, warmly referring to the seventh year Gryffindors assembled in the room.

"You're not well Harry; you shouldn't go wandering around alone." Ginny said over protectively.

"Thank you my love for caring, but make no mistake, I can still take care of myself." Harry said with only a slight hint of impatience.

“So when did you guys get married?” Parvati finally had the opportunity to ask.

“Um, just after I came out of my coma, it was my parents’ idea.” She answered, rubbing Harry’s hand.

“And did you really design the wedding dress?” Parvati asked.

“Yeah she did, and it was beautiful.” Hermione said.

“You got to go?” Parvati pressed again.

“Of course, Ron was best man and I was maid of honor.” Hermione explained.

“I wish I could have been there.” Parvati said smiling.

“We filmed it using muggle technology, you can watch it whenever you like, but you’ll have to come back with us to the castle.” Harry said.

“Castle, what castle?” Semus asked.

“Potter Castle,” Ron answered. “Its wicked man, you have to see it.” He added.

“And they will, I’ll get permission from McGonagall to take you all to the Castle this weekend.” Harry said.

“I don’t think she’ll allow it, she’s been really hard on everybody lately.” Dean said.

“That’s because Harry’s dying you prat, she’s scared Riddle might actually win, then we’d all lose.” Ron said sounding angry.

“Oh yeah, sorry Harry,” Dean apologized.

“No reason to apologize my friend, I know why Minerva’s acting that way.” Harry said. “I think talking with you guys has really helped me, and I expect to see you all this weekend.” Harry continued while slowly standing. “Oh, and if you like, you can tell Padma and

Lavender to come along too, just don't tell them where, it'll be a surprise." Harry added smiling.

"Can we tell them about you?" Parvati asked.

Harry thought for a moment. "Don't, I like to make a grand entrance." Harry said mocking the old Snape.

"Good night Harry," the group said together.

"Good night all," Harry responded happily.

Back at the castle, Ginny was helping Harry change for bed.

"You know you really shouldn't walk around alone in your condition." Ginny said more than asked.

"I'm sorry Ginny; I just needed to see Ron." Harry apologized.

"It's ok, but next time, take me along." Ginny commanded.

"Yes Ginny dear," Harry said smiling.

Ginny had become extremely overprotective of Harry, but even more so of Cindy and now Gabrielle; she refused to let either one of them out of her sight. She would take Cindy and Gabrielle to Hogwarts in the morning, escort Gabrielle to all her classes, and ensured Cindy was allowed in all her classes. Her fellow sixth years were starting to think she was losing her mind, and would continually mention it to the various faculty members.

Cindy on the other hand was taking everything calmly, she would attend Ginny's classes with her, learn all she could, and go home Happy.

By the end of February, Harry was still holding on with minimal effort while Arthur and Sirius had fallen into a sleep they were not waking up from. The Ministry had released a statement claiming that the Minister had fallen gravely ill, and would return when and if he recovered. At the request of the Minister, Albus Dumbledore was

acting in his stead, and Minerva McGonagall was the temporary Headmistress.

The press, at Dumbledore's request, made little mention of the Minister's illness and rarely had any articles on the matter. The Quibbler however, had several articles discussing how Harry, Arthur and Sirius were poisoned by someone pretending to be one of their friends.

Harry remained true to his word and got the Gryffindor seventh years a weekend reprieve from the now hectic Hogwarts. At Harry's request, Severus and Hermione took that weekend off as well.

Harry, knowing how grave things were looking, decided to hold a dinner party on Friday night to welcome his guests. He knew Molly would never leave her husband's side, so Harry went out of his way to tell her it was all right.

That afternoon, Harry was sitting with Ron and Hermione in the library; they were discussing Snape and Hermione's progress.

"Well, we think we're close, we need to do more tests, but we may have found a way to slow the process, maybe even stop it completely." Hermione said hopefully.

"But not reverse it." Harry added.

"No, not reverse it, but we are going in the right direction." Hermione said surely.

"Do you have the formula with you?" Harry asked sounding more tired than they had ever heard him.

"Yeah," she said handing him the formula.

Harry stared at the formula, his eyes were drooping.

"Cartilage," he said to himself.

"What's that Harry?" Hermione asked.

"I remember reading something, somewhere, about the cartilage of an animal; I just can't seem to remember." Harry was saying as he fell asleep.

"He's losing his memory." Hermione said to Ron.

"And finding it harder to concentrate and stay awake." Ron added.

"This can't be good, he doesn't have that much time, and we need to help him." Hermione said through tears in her eyes.

"Shark," Harry exclaimed waking suddenly.

"What Harry, what did you say?" Hermione asked.

"Shark cartilage, add shark cartilage to the formula, it will prevent the spread of the poison by preventing the formulation of new blood vessels, starving the poison." Harry said sounding more like his old self than before.

"You read this somewhere?" Hermione asked.

"Yes, in one of the other timelines, or was it this one, I don't remember, but it was in a dark magic book, it talked about ways of fighting the spread of poisons." Harry explained.

"You don't remember the title, do you?" Hermione asked intrigued.

"No, my memory is slipping, and I'm finding it harder to concentrate." Harry said.

"I'll apparate to Hogwarts and talk to Severus, maybe this could work." Hermione said standing, and vanished.

"Harry," Ron began. "Are you sure you're going to make it?" Ron asked nervously.

"Ron, I cannot promise I'll be alive this time next year, but I can promise you Riddle will not." Harry answered with all his heart.

"I don't want to lose you Harry; you've been a good friend and a good brother." Ron said with one lone tear falling down his cheek.

“Ron, listen to me, I may not get another chance to say this. You saved my life; your friendship saved my life more than once. You have meant more to me than all the magic and all the money in the world. I love you; I want you to remember that. I have made arrangements so that neither you nor Hermione will ever want for anything. Ginny will get the bulk of my fortune, but make no mistake; you’ll be well cared for.” Harry said crying.

“Harry, you’re going to make it.” Ron said emphatically.

“No Ron, I’m not sure I am, but either way, I wanted you to know I love you.” Harry said.

“I love you too mate.” Ron answered back; Harry fell asleep not hearing him.

Harry awoke to the sound of Hermione’s voice as she called for Ginny.

“Ginny, guests,” she called.

Ginny apparated to the entry of the castle, “Hello all,” she greeted them.

“Ginny, is this your castle?” Padma asked, not knowing the full details.

“Yeah, do you like it?” Ginny asked back.

“I love it,” Padma answered.

“So do I,” her twin agreed.

“Come in, let’s sit in the library.” She beckoned them.

They walked in to find the room empty, Harry had apparently awoken and left.

“Sit,” Ginny said motioning to the furniture.

“Do you live here alone?” Lavender asked.

"No, my parents, sister, Fred and George, Lee Jordan, my daughter Cindy, our new care; Gabrielle, Sirius Black; the convicted murderer," Lavender and Padma gasped at the name. "And someone else, who is that again?" She teasingly asked Hermione.

"Oh, I know who you mean, it's um, oh yeah, your husband." Hermione said as if she had just remembered.

"Oh yeah, that's him, and my husband Harry." Ginny said smiling.

"You live with the ghost of your dead husband?" Padma asked astounded.

"Hey, be nice, I'm not dead yet." Harry said, walking into the room.

The look on the faces of Padma and Lavender was exactly what Harry enjoyed, utter shock.

"Oh don't be so surprised girls." Parvati said, standing to greet Harry with a kiss. "It's good to see you again Harry, thanks for inviting us." She said smiling smugly.

"You know you're all welcome in my home anytime." Harry answered, kissing her back.

"Harry, I have some good news and some bad news, let's go talk in the other room." Hermione said standing.

"That's not necessary; we're all family, what's the news?" Harry asked either unwilling or unable to get up.

"That ingredient you gave us did the trick, that's the good news. The bad news is in two parts; the first is that it only stops the spread of the poison completely, it does not reverse it." Hermione said.

"What's the other bad news?" Ron asked expectantly.

"It doesn't work on magical creatures, and I'm a griffin animagus." Harry said as if he had known all along.

"That's right Harry, how did you know?" Hermione asked amazed.



“Two reasons, the first is that you wanted to talk to me alone, and the only true physical difference between me, Arthur and Sirius is that I’m a magical creature. The second reason is that I remember reading it.” Harry said smiling.

“Oh no Harry, does this mean you’re going to die?” Parvati asked, and then looked at Ginny. “Oh, I’m sorry Gin, I wasn’t thinking.” She apologized.

“Don’t apologize Parvati, I knew and I know I’m going to die, I have already settled all my affairs. Ginny knows how much I love her, as does Hermione and Ron, but I wanted the opportunity to tell you all as well. The years I spent at Hogwarts, the years I spent with you all, are the happiest years of my life, and I love you all for it. But this is not a funeral yet, it’s a party, so turn up the wizzarding wireless, and let’s dance.” Harry said, taking Ginny’s hand and standing.

Harry had the house elves lay out a buffet in the library, and they danced and partied well into the night. Halfway through the evening, Fred, George, Lee, Neville, Luna and Draco made an appearance and they partied like they would never party together again, mainly because, they might not.

Harry snuck out late that evening to seek out Snape. Harry found Snape holding a vigil over Arthur and Sirius.

“Hello Severus,” Harry greeted him, walking into the makeshift infirmary.

“Hello Harry, did Hermione tell you?” He asked.

“She didn’t need to, I already knew.” Harry said calmly.

“I’m sorry Harry.” Snape said sadly.

“Why would you be sorry, you have saved the lives of the Minister of Magic and my godfather, I would be proud.” Harry corrected him.

“I didn’t save anybody’s life Harry; all I did was prolong the inevitable.” Snape argued.

“That’s all any medication does, Severus, we’re all going to die, and eating right, exercise, seeing a healer regularly, all that does is prolong the inevitable. You may not have reversed the damage of the poison, but it’s no longer spreading, they will remain alive until someone finds a cure, you saved the lives of these two men, whether you believe it or not.” Harry explained.

“But I haven’t done anything for you; you’re still going to die.” Snape continued.

“Severus, listen to me; I have gained so much power, I can do almost anything with magic, I have evolved further than any wizard before me, which makes me dangerous. No one man should have that much power; let me quote a muggle movie I once saw; ‘All power corrupts, but absolute power corrupts absolutely.’ I can’t go on like this, and I’d rather die as the most powerful wizard in history, than to live as the most powerful wizard in history.” Harry stated.

“You never cease to amaze me Potter; you would rather die than have all that power, amazing.” Snape said disbelievingly.

“Did you hear what happened in the Minister’s office a few weeks ago?” Harry asked.

“Yes, Hermione told me.” Snape answered.

“Did she mention the part about the earthquake, about the building shaking?” Harry asked.

“She did,” Snape said, wondering where Harry was going with this.

“I did that, a small quake yes, but I wasn’t controlling it, I could have really hurt someone, I don’t want that on my conscience. No, I’d rather die than hurt an innocent person.” Harry said resolutely.

“Always the martyr Harry,” Snape asked, not sounding as rude as the question was.

“Always the martyr Severus,” Harry said smiling back.

Snape actually returned the smile, perhaps finally Severus Snape understood Harry Potter. Harry's smile began to fade, his face turned as hard as stone.

"What's wrong Harry?" Snape asked urgently.

Harry never answered; he just collapsed.

## Chapter 12

March 10th

Daily Prophet

Harry Potter to be Forever Immortalized  
The office of the Minister of Magic has announced that the Harry Potter Memorial will be dedicated on the Quidditch pitch of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry on the 21st of the month. As previously reported, the monument will depict the late Harry Potter clutching the sword of Godric Gryffindor, while standing in victory over the Dark Lord. Harry Potter will be forever immortalized in gold and silver watching over the future students of Hogwarts. Attendance is expected to be by invitation only.

"Professor, how can you release that statement, Harry is only awake maybe two hours a day, he can't possibly fight Riddle?" Hermione asked Dumbledore in the dining hall of Potter Castle.

"Hermione, the trap still needs to be set, Voldemort still needs to be stopped, and I have a few tricks of my own to throw at him." Dumbledore said smiling.

"I'm sorry Professor, it's just that I feel there's more we could be doing but I don't know what." Hermione apologized.

"There is no need for apologies Hermione, just hold on to that faith and keep working hard, Harry, Arthur and Sirius are in good hands." Dumbledore consoled her.

Hermione and Snape were working late that night; they had moved their laboratory to the castle to simplify the testing process. Hermione had been working on synthesizing the poison to work in reverse. She had tested her sample on several laboratory rats, but to this point, nothing had worked.

It was nearing midnight, Snape had passed out on the couch Ron had provided the day before, but Hermione kept working. She was

reading from a muggle medical textbook that discussed the inner working of viruses, and how they were spread.

“Maybe I’m going about this all wrong, maybe I should transfigure a living virus to attack the remnants of the poisons in their bodies.” Hermione thought to herself.

She continued reading and found a simple virus she could replicate and transfigure. She followed the textbook to the letter, and purposefully infected one of the rats. The virus, which was a simple flu virus, immediately took effect, and the rat was displaying the flu symptoms.

While Hermione kept an eye on the rat, she turned her attention to transfiguring the very same virus to attack its prior form, and injected this version into the rat.

The effect was just as instantaneous; the rat began to act as if it had never been infected at all. “Ok, this was just an easily combatable flu virus; now let’s try it on more complex viruses and poisons.” She told herself.

March 11th

It was already three in the morning, Hermione was still working on a moderately complex poison, but her makeshift virus was seemingly doing the trick. She had decided to attempt it on the actual poison that Harry, Arthur and Sirius had been infected with. She took one of the comatose rats, and injected it with the virus.

Hermione had apparently fallen asleep; because Snape was rousing her awake.

“Hermione, wake up, it’s six o’clock.” Snape said loudly.

“What?” She responded shortly.

“Isn’t that rat, one of the ones infected with the poison?” Snape asked, pointing to a particularly disheveled rat running around a cage.

"Oh my God," she screamed, jumping out of her chair. "It worked!" She exclaimed and began dancing around the lab.

"What worked, what did you do?" Snape asked expectantly.

Hermione began explaining what she had done and how she came up with the idea.

"So, you're fighting fire with fire, or in this case poison with poison." Snape deduced.

"Exactly," Hermione exclaimed, happy someone actually understood her.

"At what time did you give the rat the virus?" Snape asked.

"It was about three this morning." She answered.

"Three hours, if it took three hours for the rat, I estimate twenty four hours for the humans, do you concur?" Snape asked Hermione.

"No sir, I would say about thirty for a full recovery, but they'll be awake within eight." Hermione corrected him.

Snape thought for a moment. "I concur." He said. "I'll run the tests on the rat; you prepare a dosage for the patients." Snape added.

"Yes sir," Hermione said smiling.

At eight o'clock that morning, Hermione and Snape went to the makeshift infirmary where they knew all three patients would be. They carefully injected each and every one of them, then sat and waited.

"Do you think this will work on Harry?" Hermione asked.

"It will work; the problem is that since the poison was still spreading in Harry, it may take longer to heal him." Snape answered, wiping the sweat from Harry's forehead revealing his famous scar.

"What about his animagus transformation, won't it also take longer because he's a magical creature? I mean if the poison took three to

four times longer to affect Harry, won't the cure also take three to four times longer to heal him?" Hermione asked.

Snape furrowed his brow and thought for a moment. He hadn't thought of that fact, would it take longer, or more importantly, would it take longer than even Hermione suspected?

"Actually Hermione, it will take thirty to forty times longer in Harry, you have to multiply the time by ten because of the way his body reacts to outside stimuli." Snape corrected.

"But that would mean Harry won't be well enough to fight Riddle." Hermione stated the obvious.

"Worse, I can't even guarantee he'll be awake for it." Snape said nervously.

"Do you think Dumbledore has any chance of defeating Riddle without Harry?" Hermione asked tentatively.

Snape surveyed Hermione for a moment. "The Headmaster can possibly defeat the Dark Lord in an open, one on one battle, but he won't be coming alone, the Headmaster will have to concern himself with them all, no Hermione, I don't think he can win without Harry." Snape answered honestly.

"Even with all the Dark Aurors to fight the Death Eaters?" Hermione asked.

"It's not just the Death Eaters I'm concerned with, it's the Dark Lord's added followers, the giants, the vampires, and I've even heard many werewolves have joined him too. With all due respect to the Dark Aurors, they can't fight such insurmountable odds and expect to survive." Snape said.

"I hadn't thought about them. Riddle would certainly bring everything he had to this final battle; I hope we're wrong about Harry." Hermione said hopefully.

"So am I Hermione, so am I." Snape agreed.

Tonks and Cho had been traversing South America for the last two weeks, following leads presented to them from the other Dark Aurors. To date, they had been to twenty-two different magical communities with little or no prospects of finding Remus Lupin.

The latest lead was high in the Andes Mountains of Peru, a young wizard had informed the Dark Aurors that a werewolf had been seen several months before, and then vanished. The young wizard, who was hoping to be a Dark Auror after school, was to meet the two women just outside of the village.

When Tonks and Cho arrived in Peru, they found a young man in his middle teens pacing back and forth; they assumed that he was their contact.

"Hello there, are you Pedro?" Tonks asked.

"Si senora, I am, are you the Dark Aurors from England?" He asked back.

"Yes, I'm Tonks, and this is Cho Chang." She introduced them.

"I am Pedro Garcia, I've been expecting you." He said, motioning them to follow. "Tonks, that's a strange name, what does it mean?" Pedro asked curiously.

"Nothing, it's just my sir name, I don't care much for my given name." Tonks explained.

"What's your given name?" Cho asked, amazed she never knew.

"Nymphadora." Tonks said downheartedly.

Cho fought with every fiber of her being, not to laugh.

"This way," Pedro said, ignoring their conversation and pointing to a cave halfway up the mountain.

"Your English is very good, where did you learn it?" Cho asked, trying not to think about climbing a mountain.



"America, I have been living and going to school there for the last six years." Pedro explained.

"And how did you hear about the Dark Aurors?" Tonks asked.

"The Internet, do you know what the Internet is?" Pedro asked, not knowing if they were familiar with muggle computers.

"I do," Cho answered.

"I don't, what is it?" Tonks asked Pedro.

"It is a way to get a lot of information without having to leave your desk." Pedro explained simply.

"And the Dark Aurors are on the Internet?" Cho asked.

"Yes, and they have a website, its Pedro answered.

"Wow, we're on the Internet, how cool is that?" Cho said proudly.

"We are here." Pedro announced, bending down to enter the cave.

Tonks and Cho lit their wands, and followed Pedro in. He took them to the very back of the cave where a camp bed and a small trunk lay; collecting dust.

"Here," he motioned to the bed and trunk.

Tonks handed Cho her wand, and opened the trunk. Inside there were various tattered clothing, some dark magic detectors, and a journal. Tonks took out the journal and looked at the front cover.

'R J Lupin', was written on the cover.

"Cho, it's Remus' journal, it's a real clue." She announced.

Tonks took the journal outside, and began to flip through the pages. Remus had apparently documented everywhere he had been, all the people he spoke to and even the rumors he had heard along the way.

Two months into his travels he had evidently encountered several Death Eaters recruiting for Voldemort. He began to travel inconspicuously, talking to as few people as he possibly could and still accomplish his mission.

“Hey Cho, listen to this; ‘the Death Eaters are catching up to me, I’ve decided to hide in a cave in the Andes Mountains for the time being, hopefully they won’t be able to track me.’ He knew he was being followed.” Tonks told Cho.

“What’s the last entry say?” Cho asked inquisitively.

“It says; ‘The South American version of the Death Eaters are even more cruel than ours, I watched them commit such atrocities on the local residents that I just can’t take it anymore, I’m going to attack their hideout tonight, if all goes well, those slimy bastards will never be able to harm another person again.’ He must have been captured when he attacked.” Tonks surmised.

“Does it say where the hideout is?” Cho asked.

Tonks flipped back a few pages and read to herself. “Yeah, on the top of this mountain, apparently there are wards on the camp site that keep muggles from wandering in. I think we’d better report this to Ron.” Tonks added.

Both Tonks and Cho touched Pedro’s arm, and they apparated back to the DME.

Ron was sitting in the Gryffindor common room; he had just finished teaching potions to a group of Beaubaton students.

“Another week of this, and I’m going to pass out.” Ron declared to Neville.

“It could be worse; it could be a lot worse.” Neville pointed out.

Ron was about to argue, when Hermione apparated in.

“Hey guys, what are you doing?” She asked, giving Ron a kiss on the lips, and Neville a kiss on the cheek.

“Are you finally taking a break?” Ron asked shortly.

“Now Ron, no need to be snippy,” Hermione said, not sounding at all upset.

“How’s the cure searching going?” Neville asked.

“Not bad, Sirius seems to think we’re taking too long, but I’m hopeful.” Hermione said smiling.

“You’re always hopeful...” Ron was cut off by Neville.

“Did you say Sirius?” Neville asked.

“Yeah, he seems to think we should have found the cure sooner.” Hermione said almost laughing.

“You found a cure?” Ron asked excitedly.

“Well look who just caught on.” Hermione said, now outright laughing.

“Is my dad awake?” Ron asked, now bouncing up and down on his chair.

“He was awake for a few minutes, then fell back to sleep, but he’ll be completely cured by tomorrow.” Hermione said proudly.

“And Sirius and Harry too,” Neville asked, almost as excited as Ron.

Hermione’s face turned grim. “Sirius yes, but Harry is going to take some time. Severus and I estimate it will take over a month for Harry to be cured.” Hermione explained.

“But that would mean he wouldn’t be around for the final battle.” Neville whispered.

“We know Neville, we did the math first, remember.” Hermione said sadly.

“What are we going to do?” Ron asked.

Hermione looked determined. "We're going to fight, and we're going to win." She said resolutely.

"Damn right," Neville agreed.

"I'm ordering a meeting of all Dark Aurors, not currently on assignment, in the DME headquarters at eighteen hundred hours tonight, spread the word." Ron commanded Neville.

"Yes sir," Neville said standing and saluting.

"I'll see you at six." Hermione said standing and apparating back to Potter Castle.

Ron dressed in full Dark Auror uniform and apparated immediately to DME headquarters even though it was only five o'clock.

Ron found a group already starting to assemble in the conference room. Standing in the bend of the U shaped table was Tonks, Cho and a young boy.

"Commander," Tonks greeted Ron. "We have a definite lead, we found Remus' journal." She reported, handing Ron the book.

"Who's this," Ron asked referring to Pedro.

"This is the young man who helped us find Remus' Journal. His name is Pedro Garcia, he's a Peruvian student wizard trained in America." Tonks answered.

"Commander, Pedro is very interested in joining the Dark Aurors after he finishes school." Cho added.

Ron surveyed him authoritatively. "Why do you want to join us?" Ron asked Pedro directly.

"Because sir, the Dark Aurors are the best of the best." He answered definitively.

"Good answer Mr. Garcia, how much longer before you graduate?" Ron asked.

"This is my last year." He said.

"Consider yourself in our training program, but no promises." Ron said, sounding more and more like the Commander and Chief of a paramilitary organization.

"Thank you sir, you won't regret it." Pedro said excitedly.

"I'd better not." Ron said, sitting to read the journal.

Before he had a chance to start, Hermione entered and sat at his right hand.

"Remus' journal, read it for me, I need to address the group in a few minutes." Ron said, handing Hermione the journal.

When the room was filled with Dark Aurors who weren't otherwise occupied, Ron stood to address them.

"A battle is coming; the final battle and we have to be ready. So to that end, I'm ordering you all to be specially trained in the following two areas, the first is battling giants, the second is wandless summoning and repelling. Colonel Longbottom will be responsible for accomplishing this task. I want you all trained and ready in two weeks, we don't know when the battle is to occur, but we know we have to be ready. Riddle will not just come alone, or with just Death Eaters, he still has a few Dementors, he has giants, he has vampires," Hermione whispered in his ear. "And apparently he now has werewolves as well. I want you all ready, so if you'll please see the Colonel for your training assignments, I'll let you all get back to work." Ron said sitting.

"We may have another mission as well. Remus' last entry in the journal talks about a band of Death Eater types worse than the ones we have here, I think we need to attack their hideout and see if they have or know about Remus." Hermione explained.

"How many Dark Aurors do we need?" Ron asked.

"Well, according to the journal, Remus counted five hundred the week before he disappeared." Hermione said.

"That would require a hundred Dark Aurors; I don't know if I can spare them." Ron said nervously.

"Actually, I was going to recommend two hundred and fifty." Hermione clarified.

"Since when do we need one Dark Auror for only two Death Eaters?" Ron asked indignantly.

"These aren't regular Death Eaters, they're monsters, and we need to be careful. Besides, if we rid the continent of them, we may be able to get allies from the various countries to help in the battle." Hermione pointed out.

"Please Commander Sir, they torture and kill my people, muggle and wizard alike." Pedro said, obviously overhearing the conversation.

Ron stood again. "May I have your attention?" Ron waited for the room to quiet down and for everyone to retake their seats. "There has been a temporary change of plans, before we begin training; there is a battle that needs fighting first. In South America there is an evil that is worse than our own Death Eaters, we know where these wizards and witches are held up, we will storm their stronghold at dusk tomorrow. I do not expect that you go there with the intention of killing anybody, but I am telling you to protect yourselves utilizing extreme prejudice. Meet back here precisely at 1600 tomorrow, and then you will be given specific instructions. Dismissed," Ron commanded.

"Pedro," Ron called the Peruvian.

"Yes sir," he responded.

"Do you know the area?" Ron asked.

"Yes sir, very well," he answered.

"Tonks, Cho, take Pedro back to the mountains and scout out the compound; I want to know everything that goes on there. When you have enough information, come back to the castle and tell me, that's where I'll be." Ron ordered them.

"Yes sir," Tonks answered for the three.

"We may end up needing this warm up exercise; the battle with Riddle will be that much worse." Ron said quietly to himself.

"What was that Ron?" Hermione asked.

"Nothing, let's go see if my dad's awake." Ron said smiling.

Arthur was sitting up talking to Dumbledore about all that had happened during the time he was asleep.

"And the French Minister wanted me to pass along his best wishes; he's become very amiable since his experience with Harry." Dumbledore reported to Arthur.

"Thank you Albus, I appreciate all you did, I know how much you dislike the position." Arthur said smiling.

"It was a pleasure Arthur; I just hope Harry will recover quickly." Dumbledore said looking towards Harry's bed where he lay motionless.

"As do I Albus, as do I." Arthur agreed.

"He'll be fine; he's stronger than all of us put together." Sirius said from the other bed.

Ron and Hermione appeared next to Dumbledore.

"Dad, Sirius, how are you?" Ron asked, embracing his father then Sirius.

"We're fine son, how have you been?" Arthur asked back.

"Not as busy as Hermione and Snape, but busy none the less." Ron answered.

"And how about that errand I asked about?" Sirius asked.

"We have an excellent lead, and we'll be following up on it tomorrow." Ron explained vaguely.

“What errand?” Arthur asked.

“I asked Ron to search for the real Remus Lupin.” Sirius answered.

“And why are you being vague?” Arthur asked Ron, who suddenly looked uncomfortable.

“Because we’re storming the compound of wizards that make the Death Eaters look like choir boys.” Ron said icily.

“Son, that’s too dangerous, we have enough homegrown problems to worry about problems elsewhere in the world.” Arthur said.

“Dad, your wrong, evil is evil, and if we can stamp it out there, maybe they can help us stamp it out here.” Ron said angrily.

Arthur looked abashed. “I’m sorry son, you’re right, is there anything I can do to help?” Arthur asked apologetically.

“No dad, I have everything covered.” Ron said smiling.

“Don’t worry Arthur; I’ll be next to him the whole time.” Sirius said suddenly.

“You shouldn’t Sirius; you’re still as weak as I am.” Arthur argued.

“You’ll both be fine by tomorrow afternoon. But Sirius, no disrespect intended, but you’re not as highly trained as we are, you might get hurt.” Hermione said.

“Remus is the last of my best friends, I’m going.” Sirius said standing.

“Sirius, maybe you should listen to Hermione.” Dumbledore added.

“No, I’m going.” Sirius yelled.

“You can go; I’ll send someone for you at 2100 tomorrow.” Ron said, shaking his hand.

“That’s better,” Sirius said, lying down.

“I thought we were going at dusk?” Hermione whispered to Ron.



“We are,” Ron answered smiling.

March 12th

“Professor, the Dark Aurors and I are taking a leave of absence from school for the remainder of the month of March.” Ron told Dumbledore handing him signed parchments from all the Dark Aurors who were of age.

“I see, and there’s no way I could talk you out of this?” Dumbledore asked.

“No sir, but we would appreciate the opportunity to return once the crisis is over.” Ron added.

“Of course Ron, I will not prevent any of you from returning in April, but I would really appreciate it if you would think about what you’re doing.” Dumbledore explained.

“No sir, we all discussed it last night, if we’re going to fight; we’re going to focus completely on the impending battles, or we may actually die.” Ron said in no uncertain terms.

“Very well, just make sure you’re all here for the equinox.” Dumbledore said shaking Ron’s hand.

Ron returned to the war room at Hogwarts. All the Dark Aurors were waiting expectantly.

“Well,” Semus asked when Ron walked in.

“He agreed, we can all take a leave of absence and return after.” Ron announced.

The group cheered.

“Now on to more important things, Hermione and I have outlined the attack strategy. We will attack from all four sides. First, I will lead the attack from the east, when the enemy commits their forces, Hermione will lead the attack from the west, dividing their forces. When the forces are divided in two, Neville and his group will attack from the

north and Tonks and her group will attack from the south.” Ron outlined.

“Hey, what about me,” Draco asked feeling left out.

“Actually Draco, I’m saving you for last. When the attacks are fully in place, Draco will lead the remainder of the Dark Aurors on a search and rescue. You will apparate inside the compound, they won’t expect it because of the anti-apparition charms, and you will search every building, every tent, every cave, and even every corner. Any hostages you encounter, you are to get them out of there immediately. Remember, we are looking for Remus Lupin, but we will save anybody who needs saving. Tonks and Cho will meet me elsewhere to report their recognizance; we’ll meet as we had planned, at 1600 in the DME headquarters. Any questions,” nobody spoke. “Then go to the training room and prepare.” Ron commanded.

Severus was hovering over Harry in the infirmary of Potter Castle, Arthur; who was almost completely healed, was watching him intently.

“Anything,” Arthur asked Snape.

“He’s healing extremely slowly, he might be somewhat conscious by the equinox, but I wouldn’t get my hopes up Minister.” Snape said.

“You know, I am your father in law, you can call me Arthur.” Arthur pointed out.

“I know Arthur, bad habits die hard.” Snape said smiling.

“How much have you seen Peggy since this all happened?” Arthur asked.

“Not much, but she understands, let’s face it, it’s her father I was trying to help.” Snape said with a small laugh.

“Go to her Severus, she’s going to need you now, she understands what’s at stake, Harry isn’t going to change anytime soon.” Arthur suggested.

“I know; I’ll go see her now.” Snape said leaving.

Arthur was about to lay back down when Ginny came storming into the room with Cindy and Gabrielle in tow.

"Ginny," Arthur exclaimed happily.

"Why hasn't anybody told me you were healed?" She demanded, hugging her father.

"Probably because of Harry, he's going to take longer to heal." Arthur said, soothing his youngest child.

"But he will be healed?" She asked.

"Yes Ginny, Harry will be fine." Arthur said smiling.

"Hi grandpa," Cindy said, jumping into his lap.

"And how are you, pumpkin?" Arthur asked Cindy.

"I'm ok; I get to go to Hogwarts every day." She said excitedly.

"Really, are you having fun?" Arthur asked, smiling at her enthusiasm.

"Oh grandpa, it's so much fun, I get to learn all new magic, and eat with the other students, I'm so happy." Cindy said, hugging Arthur again.

"And how are you Gabrielle?" Arthur asked her.

"Very well, thank you." She answered.

"Your English is improving." Arthur complimented her.

"Thank you Minister." She said blushing.

"Daddy, do you know why I can't seem to find Ron and Hermione?" Ginny asked him, returning from Harry's bed.

"Haven't they told you, they think they may know where Remus is, I think they're going to go check." Arthur said without revealing too much.

"Oh, you'd think they would have at least told me where they were going." Ginny said huffily.

"I'm sure they'll be back soon, why aren't you in school?" He asked Ginny, trying to change the subject.

"I came home for lunch, and Winky told me you and Sirius were awake. Where's mum," Ginny asked.

"She's making a public appearance about my condition; I think the public is starting to wonder about me. She'll be back by dinner, don't worry." Arthur said.

"Are you feeling all right though daddy? Do you need anything?" Ginny asked in a motherly tone reminiscent of Molly.

"No sweetheart, I'm fine, I just want to sleep a little, I'm still not a hundred percent." Arthur said, lying back down.

"OK daddy, I'll take the girls to go eat." Ginny announced, kissing her father on the cheek.

Ron, Hermione and Draco were meeting with Tonks, Cho and Pedro. Tonks was discussing the layout of the compound.

"There are a lot of wards around the compound, but nothing we can't penetrate. There are ten barracks for fifty, aligned on one side of the compound, and two buildings with bars on the windows on the other. I managed to sneak into the buildings with bars on the windows, I didn't see Remus specifically, but I did see two hundred people huddled together in conditions unfit for animals. There are a hundred males in the one building with only one loo, and a hundred females in the other building with only one loo. There is no furniture in either building; no blankets, no other clothes than what they wear on their backs, everyone sleeps huddled together for warmth. It's revolting. I have never had such a desire to kill someone than I have with these, what did you call them Pedro?" She interrupted herself.

"Los Diablo's." Pedro said.

"That's right, these Los Diablo's." Tonks finished.

“Who are the people, did you get to figure that out?” Hermione asked.

“Oh, I know who they are, and why they’re there. They are the local witches and wizards from villages the Los Diablo’s have pillaged. They keep a supply of them in the compound to practice killing and torture spells.” Tonks said with an anger none of them had ever heard from her.

“Calm down Tonks, they will get theirs, make no mistake.” Ron told her.

“Anything else,” Draco asked.

“Yeah, I heard that compound is one of three in South America. These Los Diablo’s also have one compound in Brazil and one in Argentina.” Cho answered.

“Same amount of wizards?” Ron asked.

“We don’t know, but we will find out.” Tonks said emphatically.

The Dark Aurors began to arrive in the conference room and by four o’clock Ron called the meeting to order.

“General Granger has your specific assignments, but I’ll break it down for you quickly. Fifty of you will go with me and attack from the east. When they have alerted all their company, fifty of you, led by General Granger will attack from the west. As soon as the forces are divided, Colonel Longbottom with fifty more of you will attack from the north, at the same time, Major Tonks and fifty more will attack from the south. Those of you that remain,” Ron asked Hermione a question, then continued. “Twenty two of you will be led by Major Malfoy, you will apparate inside the compound and rescue approximately two hundred prisoners being held in two buildings, both buildings have bars on the windows. Each team leader will have specific assignments for you. Are there any questions?” Ron asked.

“I don’t have a question, but I’d like to address the group.” Tonks said to Ron who motioned his approval. “I’ve seen what kind of monsters we’re dealing with; do what you have to do to survive. Don’t trust

them; they will kill you without thinking. Be safe." Tonks said addressing all the Dark Aurors.

Ron stood again. "We will be apparating in approximately forty minutes, get your assignments and remember; you are Dark Aurors, the best of the best!" Ron exclaimed, causing the group to stand and cheer.

"Hermione," Ron said to her quietly.

"Yes Ron," she asked.

"In case something happens, I wanted to say something." Ron said vaguely.

"What," Hermione asked again.

"I love you; I've loved you since the moment I saw you on the Hogwarts Express our first year. I just wanted you to know." Ron said blushing.

"Ron, I love you too." She said kissing him deeply. "And nothing will happen, I promise." Hermione added.

Ron turned to the group of Dark Aurors.

"This is what you're trained for, this is why you make so much money, let's go out there and make the Ministry proud!" Ron exclaimed as he apparated away.

## Chapter 13

March 12th

2200 hours Zulu time; Ron had his team and Draco's team gathered in a cave on the east side of the mountain top.

"We still have about an hour of daylight, I want all of you using this time to prepare in what ever fashion you like. I'm going to outline our attack in a minute. Draco; here is a rough sketch of the compound, formulate a strategy that will afford you the opportunity to free the hostages as fast as possible." Ron said.

"When do we go in?" Draco asked.

"The first wave will commence at 2300 Zulu, the second wave at 2320 and the third and final wave at 2340, you go in anytime after that, but the sooner you get them out, the better." Ron explained.

"Consider it done." Draco said, taking his troop deeper into the cave.

"All right, now the plan of attack; I am going to address them with all of you semi-apparated so they cannot see you. If I'm correct, with the anti-apparition wards, they won't be able to get out, so they'll have to fight. I am going to order them to surrender, which they will not, the moment they say no, team A will apparate and begin to fire spells. Exactly one minute later team B will apparate and begin firing spells. Exactly two minutes later, team C, then team D five minutes after that, and finally team E five minutes after that. I want you all to use whatever spell you know to stop them, kill them if you must, but stun them if you can. Your job is to keep them occupied until the hostages are free, so feel free to do what you must." Ron explained.

"Why are we going in teams of ten?" Dean Thomas asked.

"Because their first instinct is to defend with as few men as possible, when they see groups of ten constantly apparating, they'll call in all their men since they won't know when we'll stop, as opposed to fifty at once, they'll hold back the majority of their troops." Ron explained.

“And then when Hermione starts, they’ll have to divide the remaining men to stop her.” Dean deduced.

“Exactly, and when the final two companies attack, they would have totally forgotten about the prisoners, they’ll be fighting for their lives.” Ron added.

“Brilliant,” Dean observed.

2230 hours Zulu time; Hermione had just gone through the plan of attack for her group, she, unlike Ron, was very specific as to what spells she wanted used, and when to use them. Her group was also to arrive in groups of ten, but Hermione would not be attempting negotiation like Ron, just commanding from afar.

“One more thing, there are plenty of places to maintain cover, don’t stand out in the open waiting to be hit by a spell, your safety is the most important thing.” Hermione announced.

“Do you really think this will work?” Parvati asked.

“Yes, I really do. We’ve formulated this plan based on Remus’ journal, he had apparently been watching these; Los Diablo’s for over a month.” Hermione explained.

“Do you think Remus is in there?” Colin asked.

“No I don’t, he would have a separate cell once a month, and there is no place in the compound to put him.” Hermione deduced.

“You don’t think it might be possible for them to let Remus loose on the prisoners just to torture both them and Remus?” Colin asked tentatively, realizing their demented way of thinking.

“Oh God, I hope not. Remus would be devastated; unwillingly harming all those people would drive him mad.” Hermione said with a shudder.

“But what if they did, wouldn’t they all be werewolves now?” Parvati asked nervously.



“Or maybe this is where Voldemort gets his new followers; maybe he’s in cahoots with these wizards?” Colin added.

Hermione turned away from the barrage of questions, she didn’t know the answers and didn’t want to even think about coming up with an answer.

“Padma, when’s the full moon?” Hermione quickly asked Parvati’s twin.

“Tonight, why,” she asked back.

“What if you’re all right, what if they are werewolves, what if being held together is their idea of building an army?” Hermione asked no one in particular.

“Then at the rise of the full moon, one werewolf will convert two hundred more.” Colin answered needlessly.

“Draco, I have to tell Draco.” Hermione said, about to apparate.

“No, the battle has begun.” Parvati said, stopping Hermione from leaving her post.

2300 hours Zulu time; Ron had just finished his speech to Los Diablo’s, as Ron expected, they laughed and began a barrage of spells at him. The first wave of ten arrived and began returning fire.

An alarm rang through the compound, Diablo’s were manning the magical wooden wall that separated the compound from the rest of the mountain, and Ron was being completely overrun. He watched as one of his captains fell two meters from him, but he couldn’t tell if he was stunned or dead.

Ron decided to move the body to cover in case he was just stunned. Ron ran out from behind a rock, grabbed Bill York; a former Auror turned Dark Auror, and began dragging him behind cover. Just as he was about done, a spell hit him square in the chest and sent him flying into a rock.

2301 Zulu; Dean arrived with the second wave, after seeing what had happened to Ron, he ordered all the Dark Aurors to begin using the killing curse to protect Ron's body. The Dark Aurors answered the call perfectly; they began a nonstop volley of curses that forced the Diablos to take temporary cover allowing Dean to remove Ron and Bill's bodies.

"Change of plans, everybody materialize and attack!" Dean screamed out to the semi-apparated Dark Aurors awaiting their time to strike.

Thirty Dark Aurors appeared, having heard Dean's command. They began their own endless volley of spells specifically designed to break down the magically reinforced walls of the compound.

Dean started to hear screams from inside the compound; he had hoped it was the Diablos and not their hostages.

2315 Zulu; "What's happening to him? What is going on?" A wizard in his mid twenties was screaming in the cell building.

"Oh my God, he's a werewolf!" Another yelled.

The entire group began to beat their fists on the walls of the cell, hoping beyond hope that the stone wall would fall.

"I can't stop myself!" Remus screamed. "Kill me now!" He added, but nobody would go near him. They kept screaming and beating on the walls.

"He's going to kill us all!" They were screaming so loud, they couldn't hear the battle waging on outside.

"Dennis, go to Hermione, tell her to change the plans, tell her to start attacking immediately with everything she's got, go now." Dean commanded, and Dennis apparated away.

2319 Zulu; "Everybody ready," Hermione yelled, and the group yelled their agreement.

"Hermione, wait," Dennis screamed.

“What, what’s happened?” She asked desperately.

“Ron’s down, we don’t know if he’s alright, but Dean wants you to change the plan and hit them with everything you’ve got.” Dennis said breathlessly.

“You heard him, we attack as one!” Hermione yelled.

“And you should attack the walls, they seem more afraid of the walls coming down than of being individually killed.” Dennis said, evaluating the fight on the other side.

“We will, now I need you to go to Draco, tell him Remus is in there and the moon will be full in twenty five minutes, he won’t have enough time.” She commanded Dennis.

“Yes ma’am,” he said apparating away.

2320 Zulu; “Attack,” Hermione yelled, and she and the fifty troops vanished at once.

When they appeared, they saw a group of Diablo’s starting to escape from the compound. The Diablo’s had no chance, Hermione’s group began firing killing curses in all directions, within seconds one hundred Diablo’s were killed, and the rest ran back inside the compound.

“Attack the walls!” Hermione ordered, and they began sending spells at the wooden walls of the compound.

With Dean on the east side and Hermione on the west side, the Diablo’s were starting to get nervous, no more was this fifty angry wizards against five hundred, it was one hundred angry wizards against three hundred and fifty.

“Draco, Hermione said that Remus Lupin is inside the compound and the moon will be full in twenty five minutes.” Dennis said anxiously.

“Damn, that only gives us five minutes to find and neutralize Lupin; I don’t think we can do it.” He said to no one in particular.

“What if everyone else went earlier?” Dennis asked.

Draco looked at Dennis like he had never seen anything like him. “Good idea, go, tell them to attack now, don’t wait, I need the extra time.” He commanded Dennis.

“Yes sir,” Dennis saluted Draco.

“Oh and Dennis, I think the Order of Merlin would be appropriate.” Draco said smiling.

“Thank you sir,” Dennis said apparating to the next group.

Dennis went to Neville and Tonks and relayed the message; they had agreed to attack at exactly 2325, to give Draco and his group the added time they needed.

When Dennis arrived back at the east side of the compound, the walls had fallen and the Dark Aurors were shooting into the compound now.

“Sir, Remus Lupin is in the compound and it will be a full moon in twenty minutes.” Dennis told Dean. “And the north and south units will be attacking ahead of schedule, in two minutes.” He added looking at his watch.

“Good, pick up your wand and start shooting.” Dean ordered him.

Dennis began firing curses at the Diablo’s; he noticed that fewer than forty Dark Aurors were joining him. Their numbers were dwindling.

2325 Zulu; The north and south units joined the battle, they began their own onslaught of spells designed to bring down the walls of the compound.

The job of distracting the Diablo’s was working; they had every Diablo on the wall fighting back on all four sides. They had no chance, the Dark Aurors were too well trained, and the attack was too thought out.

Draco waited a moment before apparating inside the compound. He wanted to make sure all the Diablos were on the walls, and wouldn't be looking inside.

The last of the Dark Aurors apparated inside the compound, they found nobody inside other than themselves. The entire enemy forces were indeed on the walls.

"Team A to building 2, team B with me." Draco commanded.

Justin took team A and went to the female detention facility and Draco took team B to the male detention facility.

When Draco and his team entered the facility, the only thing they could hear were the cries of the men trapped inside with a werewolf.

"Blast that door, and stun everybody, I don't want them giving away our mission." Draco ordered.

Bob Doyle, another previous Auror, blew the door apart, and a rush of frightened men ran out towards them. The group of twelve open fire on everything that moved out of the room.

Before long, one hundred and three men were lying on the floor, and the only sound they could hear was the torturous screams of a man becoming a werewolf.

"We need to bind the animal completely; I don't even want him to see, is that clear?" Draco asked.

Within moments a huge wolf exited the prison cell sniffing at all the stunned men. Draco just eyed the creature, but he made no sound. He walked towards it, as if to pet the animal. When he was within four meters, his team all shot out binding spells at the animal.

Draco had successfully distracted the werewolf so that his team could stop it. Draco turned back to his men.

"Start apparating these bodies to St. Mungo's, all but the werewolf, I want him for myself." Draco ordered, and the men began taking two at a time away.

In the female building, a mirror image of what had just happened was playing out. The Diablo's had apparently captured a female werewolf, or possible made one, and placed it in with the females. The Dark Aurors made just as easy a time with them, as the others had with the males.

When it came time for the female werewolf, the same strategy was used, only this time, they weren't as lucky. Justin was distracting the female when he got to close; the female lunged at him, and just managed to break the skin on his left arm, before the rest managed to bind her. Justin had been bitten by a werewolf.

"Forget about me, get these women out of here, start apparating them to St. Mungo's; go." He commanded.

His team did not question him; they began taking the women two by two.

Draco mustered his men back at the cave they had originally waited in. Both werewolves were lying motionless on the ground.

"Now we attack from inside, you four," he motioned to the four youngest members of his team. "Inform the leaders of the other units; let them know we're ready." He said. The four team members apparated immediately and the rest waited.

2355 Zulu; with perfect execution, twenty five members of each of the four teams plus Draco's entire team apparated inside the compound, and began a merciless attack on the remaining Diablo's. The enemy had no chance, within ten minutes the battle was over, out of the five hundred Diablo's only ten surrendered and were taken into custody, the rest lay dead on the field of battle. The Dark Aurors scored one for the side of good.

Once the battle was complete, Hermione instructed all the Dark Aurors who were injured to report to St. Mungo's, the rest mustered on the east side of the compound where they sustained the greatest loses.

Twenty Dark Aurors were killed, and another forty-two were injured. Hermione only concerned herself with one; Ron. She ran up to his motionless body, and cradled his head on her lap.

Cho ran her wand over Ron's body and smiled.

"Just stunned, he should be all right." Cho said with a sigh of relief.

"Can you revive him?" Hermione asked relieved.

"Not here, he should go back to the castle." Cho answered.

"What castle, Hogwarts?" Colin asked.

"No Colin, but why don't you help me with him and you can see for yourself." Hermione said, attempting to stand with Ron still on her lap.

Colin waved his wand, and Ron floated off of Hermione.

Hermione ordered all who knew about Harry to meet at Potter Castle, and informed the rest to either stand guard at St. Mungo's or return home.

The first battle was over.

March 14th

That morning Hermione was caring for Ron, he had suffered extensive physical damage from the impact after he was stunned. He suffered a major concussion, a broken arm, two broken legs and two broken ribs that led to internal bleeding. Harry's healer, Sarah, patched him up quite quickly, but ordered three days of bed rest.

"Stop being stubborn, you'll eat your soup and like it." Hermione ordered.

"You know 'Mione, if I didn't love you so much, I'd probably hate you." Ron said fishing for a kiss.

"And if you weren't so damn stubborn, you'd learn to fear me." Hermione answered slapping Ron in the back of the head.

“Hey, that hurt!” Ron bellowed.

“Oh, I’m sorry,” Hermione said realizing that was where he hit his head.

“You owe me a kiss for that one.” Ron said, reaching over to kiss Hermione.

“You kiss me, and I’ll hit you again.” Hermione threatened.

“Why are you so upset?” Ron asked confused.

“Because you risked your life to move a body you didn’t know was even alive, and ended up scaring me half to death. But could I worry about you, no, I had a battle to fight, so for an hour I didn’t know whether you were alive or dead.” Hermione scolded him.

“I’m sorry ‘Mione, but if he was alive, I wanted to make sure he stayed that way.” Ron apologized, and finally received his kiss from Hermione.

“And you did save his life.” Arthur said walking into the room.

“Hey dad,” Ron greeted him.

“I’m starting to wonder if I want my youngest son running around killing dark wizards.” Arthur said, not really sounding upset.

“Come on dad, I’m fine.” Ron assured him.

“Yeah, right now you’re fine, but wait until your sister finds you, I would have preferred to go on the battle field.” Arthur said, not quite joking.

“She’s angry?” Ron asked.

“Angry, she’s livid; I have never seen her so upset. She makes your mother look like the perfect angel.” Arthur said sitting.

“How are my troops?” Ron asked somberly.



Arthur looked at Hermione who shrugged her shoulders. "Twenty died in the battle, twenty two more were seriously injured and will be in St. Mungo's for at least a week and 1 was bitten by a werewolf." Arthur said flatly.

"And the rest," Ron pressed.

"The rest of the Dark Aurors are fine." Arthur said.

"No, I mean the two hundred people we rescued." Ron clarified.

"All alive and well, they're in St. Mungo's. I heard first hand the atrocities those Diablo's committed, you did the right thing, and more importantly, those twenty men died fighting the good fight." Arthur told his son. "And I'm extremely proud of you, of both of you." Arthur added.

"And Remus," Ron asked.

"Remus and his female counterpart are resting here in the castle, as the story goes; Remus was captured attempting to demolish the Diablo's compound approximately eight months ago. He was placed in a room with a female tourist they captured the week before, it was during the full moon. She became a werewolf also, and they've been creating a werewolf army ever since. Apparently Voldemort pretends to save them the morning after, and promises them a cure after he utilizes their services." Arthur explained.

"How are they both, mentally?" Ron asked.

"Devastated, we offered to use a memory charm, but they both outright refused. They claim they want to remember everything, they feel responsible." Arthur said sadly.

"What is the woman's name?" Ron pressed his father for information.

Arthur again looked at Hermione who shrugged again. "You know her; Katie Bell." Arthur answered reluctantly.

Ron plopped back down on his pillow, he felt like he let his friends down, he should have wondered about Remus earlier, he should

have sent people to look for him earlier, he felt like it was entirely his fault.

“There is some good news; the Department for International Magical Cooperation has put your entire Department in for the Order of Merlin first class.” Arthur said, trying to liven his spirits.

“Not much consolation for the twenty that died.” Ron spat.

“Well, you did make headlines again.” Fred said, walking into the room and throwing the Daily Prophet on top of Ron.

Ron was staring at his own picture.

### Score One for the Good Guys

Ronald Weasley, the Commander and Chief of the Dark Aurors led a courageous attack on dark wizards in Peru two nights ago. Two hundred and twenty five Dark Aurors stormed the compound of five hundred dark wizards that called themselves; Los Diablo's, “The Devils” for those who don't speak Spanish. These dark wizards committed atrocities so heinous; publishing specifics would be unethical. Suffice it to say, over two hundred witches and wizards from South America were rescued, not to mention the elimination of dark wizards even more vicious than our own Death Eaters. The fatalities for the Dark Aurors were listed as numerous. The Daily Prophet has learned that in fact only twenty Dark Aurors perished in the battle. The Department of International Magical Cooperation in conjunction with the International Confederation of Wizards, and the Peruvian Ministry have petitioned for the awarding of the Order of Merlin, first class to all the Dark Aurors involved in the battle. We here at the Daily Prophet agree completely, these are brave men and women who deserve recognition for their self sacrificing actions.

“Only twenty, they make it sound like it's nothing.” Ron said disgusted, throwing the newspaper on the floor.

By now, Ron's room had filled with people, but none said a word.

“Is this where he is, let me at him,” Ginny bellowed as she pushed through the people in the room. “Ronald Weasley, how dare you go

on a rescue mission without me, aren't I a high ranking officer of the Dark Wizards, aren't I a very capable witch, isn't Remus one of my friends too? How dare you leave me at home like some sort of old maid!" Ginny continued bellowing.

Ron stared at her unblinking. He didn't know whether he should apologize, or yell back. He decided on the former.

"I'm sorry Gin, but we needed people to watch over Harry and Cindy, they are too important to risk, even if it is for Remus Lupin." Ron said sounding apologetic.

"Nice lie," Hermione whispered.

"Thanks," Ron whispered back.

Ginny was dumbstruck, she had absolutely no reply to such logic.

"Well, I um, well, ok well next time you'd better at least keep me informed." She said storming out of the room.

"Hey George," Fred called.

"Yes Fred," George answered.

"I think Ron should be put in for the Order of Merlin first class for such a natural instinct to sidestep mines." Fred joked. The room broke out in laughter, the first time there had been true laughter in Potter Castle in a long time.

Ron went in to see Remus and Katie. He was stunned to see them huddled so close together.

"Hello Remus, hello Katie," Ron greeted them tentatively.

"Ron," they both exclaimed together excitedly, and took Ron in an embrace.

"You save our lives, all of us." Katie said, lightly kissing Ron on the lips.

"We heard what you did, I can't get over you're the same Ronald Weasley from third year." Remus said, slapping him on the back.

"Not completely the same I hope." Ron said smiling for the first time since before the battle.

They all laughed for a moment, then Remus turned serious.

"Ron, can you help us?" Remus asked.

"Of course, anything," Ron assured him.

"First, where are we, second, are we prisoners, third, why is everybody being so secretive?" Remus asked the questions he and Katie had been pondering.

"Ok, first you're in a castle, second, you are not prisoners, though I suspect they want to limit your access because someone using Polyjuice potion poisoned my dad, and third because there is so much classified activity in this castle that everyone has to watch what they say." Ron explained.

"Castle, which castle, is it Hogwarts?" Katie asked.

"No, it belongs to my sister and her husband." Ron answered honestly but evasively.

"Which sister," Remus asked.

"He has more than one sister? I thought it was only Ginny." Katie said.

"No, Harry found his two long lost sisters, both older than Percy but younger than Charlie." Remus explained to Katie.

Ron did not answer hoping Remus forgot the question he asked.

"Well, which sister?" Remus asked again.

"Virginia." Ron said, using Ginny's given name.

"Ginny has a castle? Ginny has a husband?" Remus asked astounded.

“She has both, yes.” Ron agreed.

“Whom did she marry?” Katie asked.

Ron looked for ways of ending the conversation, but none came.  
“Harry James Potter.” Ron finally answered.

“Harry, but Harry’s dead, what did she marry his ghost?” Remus asked sarcastically.

“Harry is not dead, nor has he ever died to the best of my knowledge, and you’re a guest at his home, Potter Castle.” Ron said huffily.

“Any other surprises,” Remus asked angrily.

“Have you seen Sirius yet?” Ron asked back.

“Sirius,” Remus exclaimed.

“I guess not, Sirius is alive as well.” Ron said needlessly.

“How could Sirius be alive, I know for a fact he died in the Ministry?” Remus asked indignantly.

“Because Remus, nothing is ever as it seems.” Ron said seriously.

“Can you let us out of the room?” Katie asked politely.

“Very well, but if the Minister of Magic sacks me over this, I’m coming back to curse the both of you.” Ron said playfully.

Ron led them out and down to the dining hall. They sat down to eat, as they were all hungry.

Winky prepared a huge lunch for the three since she expected them all to be hungry from their ordeal.

While the three were eating, and Ron was explaining all that had happened over the previous eight months, Hermione, Ginny, Cindy and Gabrielle made their way into the hall.

“Ron, what’s going on here?” Hermione asked.

“Lunch,” Ron answered with a mouth full of potatoes.

“No offense Remus, Katie, but you haven’t been cleared yet by Madam Sarah.” Hermione explained.

“Who’s Madam Sarah?” Katie asked.

“Harry’s personal healer” Ginny answered, sitting next to Remus.

“Harry has a personal healer, how rich is he?” Katie pressed.

“Rich enough to buy me the Chudley Cannons,” Ron answered.

“What,” Remus and Katie exclaimed together.

“Yeah, but he hasn’t given them to you yet Ron dear.” Molly said as she entered the room.

“Yeah Ron, you still have to get married.” Ginny joked.

“Don’t rub it in.” Ron said, getting a slap from his girlfriend.

“Daddy’s thirsty.” Cindy said, grabbing a glass of pumpkin juice and leaving the table.

“Who’s her daddy?” Katie asked.

“Harry,” the rest of the room answered.

“Wow, I am out of touch.” Katie said laughing.

“How does she know Harry’s thirsty?” Katie asked.

“Harry’s been poisoned also, but he’s taking longer to heal, he’s not even awake yet. I doubt he’s thirsty.” Hermione answered.

“If he’s not awake, what is she going to do with the drink?” Katie asked again.

“Give it to Harry.” Luna said walking in with Neville.

"You don't think she might accidentally drown him, do you?" Ginny asked concernedly.

"I don't think so; Harry will probably just drink it." Luna said, sitting down.

"Luna, Harry is asleep." Hermione said in a condescending voice.

"Not if he asked Cindy for a drink, she knows the difference between an awake father and an asleep father." Luna said matter-of-factly.

"What are you talking about?" Ron asked angrily.

"Their connection," she said looking at the group. "Don't you feel it when he communicates with her telepathically?" Luna asked confused.

At that moment Cindy walked back in with an empty glass.

"Honey, what did you do with the drink?" Ginny asked.

"I gave it to daddy, he drank it." She answered simply.

"And is daddy awake now?" Ginny pressed.

"No, he went back to sleep, he's tired." Cindy said, going back to her lunch.

"This is great; he's starting to wake up sporadically." Hermione exclaimed.

March 15th

Remus and Katie spent the remainder of the night getting reacquainted with everyone in the castle. Sirius and Remus spent the entire night talking about old times.

That morning, Arthur called for a general meeting; he wanted to discuss the Diablo's situation.

"Thank you all for coming." Arthur began, addressing the people in the library of Potter Castle. "I first want to congratulate the Dark

Aurors on their Order of Merlin first class, but more importantly, on a successful mission to save two hundred innocent people from dark wizards; congratulations. Next, our task is not complete, we have received intelligence that there are two other such compounds in South America and I feel we should destroy them as well. The reconnaissance I sent out informs me these Diablo's are just as bad as the others, but have less hostages; only one hundred a piece. I would like to hit them simultaneously tomorrow night, I will be meeting with the CNC of the Dark Aurors to work out a strategy today, if any of you have recommendations, please let me know." Arthur announced.

"Do we have enough troops to sustain two attacks on these Diablo's?" Sirius asked.

"We will, the Argentinean and Brazilian Ministries have promised us seven hundred troops between the two, that, coupled with our own troops will make for a decisive victory." Arthur answered.

"What about the giants?" Neville asked.

"Well we need them for the final battle; I don't want to end up losing them prematurely." Arthur said and Neville nodded.

"Can I go?" Remus asked.

"And me?" Katie added.

"Yes, you both may go, but you'll have to take your orders from your company commanders." Arthur said.

"Deal," they both said together.

"Any other questions," Arthur asked.

No one spoke.

"Then this meeting is adjourned. Dobby tells me dinner is now ready." Arthur said, rubbing his hands together in anticipation of another Winky meal.



While the group was eating another delicious meal, Snape and Peggy arrived late.

"Severus, Peggy, over here." Arthur called to them from the middle of the long dining table. "Severus, you remember Remus don't you?" Arthur asked pleasantly.

"Of course I do, it's great to see you alive and well." Snape said pleasantly.

"Severus, that can't be you?" Remus asked astounded.

"Of course it's me, and this is my lovely wife Peggy Weasley." He introduced them.

"Wife, Weasley, boy I have missed quite a bit." Remus said laughing. "And this is my fiancée, Katie." Remus said, motioning to the beautiful young woman next to him.

"Fiancée," Hermione asked loudly.

"Yes, didn't I mention, I proposed while we were prisoners, I swore if we ever got out of there alive, I would marry her and be with her for the rest of my life." Remus said, kissing Katie.

"Well congratulations Remus, if you're even half as happy as Peggy and I are, you'll be together for ever." Snape said romantically.

"I can't get over the change in you Severus, it must be Peggy, you are warm and friendly and easy to talk to." Remus said astounded.

"That is the main reason," Severus said, squeezing Peggy's hand. "But there is another reason." Snape said, rolling up his sleeve.

"The dark mark, it's gone." Remus said happily. "But I thought those couldn't be removed?" He asked.

"They can't, as far as the wizarding community knows, but there is this infectious young man who seems to know everything." Snape said.

"It's Harry, isn't it?" Remus asked knowingly.

"He's an amazing young man; a good father, a good husband, and a good friend, he even presided over my wedding." Snape told him.

"That's amazing; I can't believe all that has happened; I'm so glad to be back." Remus said smiling at his future bride.

Dumbledore burst into the room, and whispered in the Minister's ear.

## Chapter 14

March 15th

Dumbledore and Arthur left the dining hall for the secret war room in Potter Castle. They both went straight over to the plotting board where Harry kept track of all the Dark Aurors and more importantly, Voldemort.

"How many dead," Arthur asked Dumbledore impatiently.

"My source estimates over three hundred, but he can't be sure. Dumbledore answered.

"He destroyed them both?" Arthur pressed.

"Yes Minister, both the Brazilian and the Argentinean Ministries are completely destroyed. According to my sources; Voldemort became very distraught when he lost his crop of werewolves, he immediately apparated to both the Los Diablo's compounds and ordered the immediate attack." Dumbledore explained.

"Are the Ministers dead?" Arthur asked solemnly.

"As far as we know," Dumbledore said.

"Where is Voldemort now?" Arthur asked.

Dumbledore touched the plotting board in the middle of the room. "He's back at his hideout." He answered.

"Have you sent anyone to check on the Diablo's?" Arthur continued his barrage of questions.

"Yes and both compounds are empty." Dumbledore said calmly.

"There were over a thousand Diablo's in those camps, now they're with Voldemort." Arthur said aloud.

"And now they are with Voldemort." Dumbledore agreed.

“That puts his numbers to over two thousand, we cannot combat such forces.” Arthur said worriedly.

“Only with a well laid plan can Voldemort and his followers be defeated.” Dumbledore stated.

“And do you have such a plan Albus?” Arthur asked.

“Yeah, the Dark Aurors,” Ron said entering the room.

“Exactly,” Dumbledore agreed.

“What about them?” Arthur asked.

“The battle is to be fought on the grounds of Hogwarts; only the Dark Aurors can apparate and disapparate on the grounds. We can apparate for a split second, fire curses, and disapparate before they even have time to react.” Ron answered.

“But you can only maintain that state for ten minutes.” Arthur pointed out.

“Yeah, but in ten minutes we can stop more than half his army.” Ron argued.

“Not the vampires, werewolves and giants.” Arthur continued.

“No, but I have a plan that might help.” Dumbledore added.

“So I guess we’re not attacking the Diablo’s in two days.” Ron said needlessly.

“No Ron, we have preparations to make.” Arthur said, looking at Dumbledore.

March 16th

Ron had ordered a general assembly of all Dark Aurors, even those currently on assignment, in the conference room of the DME. It was time to let them know the actual plan.

When Ron entered the conference room, he was surprised to see Hermione had taken the liberty of magically expanding the room to accommodate not only the Dark Aurors, but the five hundred house elves; in stadium seating at the back of the room, one giant; in a chair that had been magically enlarged, and a thrown-like chair behind the U shaped table; for the Minister himself.

Ron sat at the very center of the U shaped conference table with Hermione on his right and Neville on his left. He sat whispering to Hermione and Neville until the room had completely filled.

"What is the name of the giant representative?" Ron asked Neville before his speech.

"Prom; he is their military strategist, if you call destroying everything a strategy." Neville answered with a small laugh.

Neville stood when the entire room was present. "Ladies and gentlemen, the CNC," Neville announced.

The room applauded, but the sound of the giant clapping was so deafening that Ron had to cover his ears.

"Thank you Colonel. Ladies and gentlemen, I know many of you are on assignment, but this meeting is the most important you will ever attend. In exactly five days the largest battle will ever be fought between good and evil. On the side of good we have two hundred and seventy five Dark Aurors, five hundred house elves, three hundred giants and one thousand wizards and witches from various countries and backgrounds. That is the good news, now the bad; the enemy has twelve hundred dark wizards and witches, four hundred giants, fourteen hundred werewolves, one thousand goblins, five hundred vampires and one hundred and fifty trolls. If you think the odds are against us, then you don't really know the Dark Aurors, in a moment General Granger will begin assigning tasks for each and everyone of you, but in the meantime, let me explain how I see the odds. One; each Dark Auror is capable of stopping about 10 wizards, witches and werewolves, right there the odds become closer, each elf is capable of stopping three to five goblins, right there the odds overturn, each giant in the Unas clan can stop two regular giants, now were talking a decisive victory, but I'm not done, the one

thousand wizards and witches can easily take on the five hundred vampires and the one hundred and fifty trolls. We are an unbeatable foe; we will win this battle, which means we will end this war in five days time. But enough of this rah rah speech, I give you General Granger.” Ron said, ending his speech.

The room burst into spontaneous applause even louder, if possible, than before.

“Are they applauding my great speech, or because Hermione is about to speak?” Ron jokingly asked Neville.

“I heard the speech, they’re applauding Hermione.” Neville joked back.

“Good morning,” Hermione began, rising from her chair. “The following is the battle plan for the upcoming equinox.

First, the Dark Aurors will be broken down into two divisions, the ‘Giant Division’ will comprise of one hundred and fifty and will remain in the giant village until Voldemort releases his giants, after they have successfully transported the giants, their task is to attack the dark wizards and witches as they arrive, they are to use the apparate / disapparate tactic. The second group; the ‘Wolf Division’ will take position atop the Hogwarts battlements and attack all werewolves as they arrive, remember, they won’t be in werewolf form so you’ll have to use the ‘Anti-concealment’ charm to reveal who is and is not a werewolf. Hogwarts will supply the silver knives necessary to stop them.

Second, the house elves will remain in the castle with one lookout on the battlements; he will inform the rest, when the goblins are within the school grounds. If no goblins arrive, they are to remain within the castle for added security.

Third, the giants will remain in their village until a Dark Auror announces when it is time to go, then two giants for every Dark Auror will be transported to the battle. Your job is to fight the giants, and if you can, the trolls. If it’s possible, maintain your battle away from the rest, you don’t want to be accidentally hit by a spell or curse.

Lastly, the wizards and witches, they are not present due to time restraints, but so you know, their job will be to fight the vampires and trolls, nothing else. They will remain in the castle proper until such time as we may need them. As with the house elves, they will have one witch or wizard on the battlements to keep watch and inform the rest of the proper time.

You will all be given your specific posting as you leave this room, if you have any questions, or you would like to voice an opinion or concern, now is the time. Don't wait until you're in the middle of a battle with spells and curses flying all around you to give us a better idea. Any questions," Hermione asked, finishing the plan of attack.

"I have a question, how do we know they will be at Hogwarts when you want them?" Goyle, of all people, asked.

"Good question Gregory, the answer is because we lured them there, the Harry Potter Memorial was a plan conceived by Harry himself, he knew Voldemort would attack any such ceremony, so he conceived the plan." Hermione explained.

"Who is going to face Voldemort?" Crabbe asked, getting courage from Goyle's question.

"Dumbledore," the Minister answered.

"Any other questions," Hermione asked. No one spoke. "All right then, grab your specific assignments on the way out, and we'll muster at Hogwarts at 1500 on the 21st of March." Hermione finished, sitting back down.

March 19th

Two nights before the final battle; the inner circle, those who knew of Harry, were gathered in the dining hall of Potter Castle, they were discussing, for the tenth time, the battle plan.

"My sources in the Death Eater ranks inform me that Voldemort has ordered them to apparate in Hogsmeade at exactly seven o'clock on the night of the 21st." Dumbledore was explaining.

“And the rest,” Ron asked, referring to the giants, werewolves and others.

“We know little, other than a messenger was sent yesterday to each and every group.” Dumbledore said.

“He’s taken the bait.” Fred said.

“What about Harry?” Hermione asked.

“He’s only awake five to ten minutes a day; he’ll be of no help.” Ginny answered sadly.

“Are you concerned about the prophecy Hermione?” Dumbledore asked.

“Yes Professor I am, if it’s true that Harry’s supposed to kill Riddle, wouldn’t that mean that all you’re going to end up doing is the same as the last time, leave him a spirit?” Hermione asked, voicing her concern.

“That is a possibility Hermione, but right now we have no choice.” Dumbledore explained.

“Is everything else in place?” Arthur asked, purposely changing the subject.

“Yes dad, everyone knows what they are doing, where they will be waiting, and who they will be fighting.” Ron answered.

“Ron,” George began. “Fred and I are not in the Dark Aurors, Lee is not a fully qualified Dark Auror, but we all want to be there on the equinox. Do you have jobs for us?” George asked sounding more like an adult than anyone had ever heard.

Ron glanced at his mother and father; both had worried looks on their faces.

“Have you mastered advanced apparition?” Ron asked back.

“Yes they have.” Neville answered.



“Then report to Neville at three o’clock on the equinox.” Ron said levelly.

“What about me?” Percy piped in.

“And me?” Bill added.

“You both report to Hermione, she’ll tell you what to do.” Ron said.

“Who’s watching the kids?” Hermione asked Ginny.

“My mother and sisters,” Ginny answered.

“How many civilians are there going to be in the seats?” Sirius asked Arthur.

“Two hundred, including all the high ranking members of the Ministry and their families,” Arthur answered quietly.

“Will they be safe?” Snape asked the Minister.

“We have added extra precautions, they should remain unharmed.” Dumbledore answered.

“And the Minister, will he be safe?” Snape pressed.

“No Severus, I will not be safe, I will be on the field of battle with my sons.” Arthur answered emphatically.

“Then I will be standing next to you.” Snape added.

“Please no Professor, we’ll need you against the giants.” Ron interrupted.

“Very well I’ll go where I’m needed.” Snape said sounding deflated.

“If the Minister has no objections, I’ll stand by his side.” Sirius said seriously.

“So will I, it’s my job.” Cho said proudly.

“And me,” Colin spoke up.

"No, I don't need that much protection." Arthur said dismissively.

"Yes you do Minister, and as the Commander and Chief, I order it." Ron said in an official tone.

"It looks like you made the right decision for the CNC position." Dumbledore said with a twinkle in his eye.

"It would appear so." Arthur said proudly.

March 21st The Vernal Equinox

It seemed no one in the castle could sleep the night before, except Harry. They were all gathered in the library reminiscing in small groups about various things. Ron, Hermione, Neville and Parvati were off in a corner trying desperately to forget, if even for a small while, what was to transpire that night.

"Do you remember when all we had to worry about was whether Snape would fail us or not?" Parvati asked the group.

"Yeah, now we have to worry about whether Snape survives or not." Ron said flatly.

"How did a bunch of kids end up deciding the fate of the entire Magical community?" Hermione asked no one in particular.

"You know the answer; Harry." Neville answered for the group.

"Would you do it all again," Parvati asked Hermione.

"Are you asking if I knew ahead of time what would happen, would I elect to be one of the students in the castle?" Hermione asked for clarification.

"Yeah, would you like to be safe in Hogwarts, or out on the field of battle fighting for everyone on Earth?" Parvati replied.

"That's easy; I would rather be out than in. I could never, or would never sit idly by while other people fought for my protection. Yes Parvati, I would do it all again. You?" Hermione asked back.

"Yes." Parvati answered.

"Me too." Ron added.

"So would I." Neville agreed.

"So here we are, a bunch of seventeen year old kids discussing the fate of the world, at least we'll have stuff to tell our grand children." Hermione said with a laugh.

"What time is it?" Ron asked Neville.

"Twelve." Neville said, looking at his watch.

"I think we should all have a big lunch, because I don't think we'll have time for dinner." Ron said.

They all stood and walked slowly towards the dining hall of Potter Castle. When the others in the room saw them, they followed along just as slowly.

"This time tomorrow it will all be over. For good or for bad, it will be over." Ron announced to the group at the table.

"And we can all come back here and laugh about the whole thing." Fred said optimistically.

"Damn right!" Draco added.

"I want to say something." Molly began rising from her chair. "Tonight all the men in my life are going out into harm's way to protect us all, I wanted them to know how proud I am of each and every one of them. I love you all, and I want you to return safely, don't go looking for trouble, it will find you. Be safe." She cut herself off as the tears became more than she could handle and ran off.

No one spoke for the rest of the meal, and the rest of their time in the castle. They all ate; retired back to the library and awaited the stroke of three.

When the clock struck three, everyone, without the slightest pretence, began apparating away to Hogwarts. The war was about to begin.

Dumbledore awaited everyone in the inner circle in the great hall, most of the students were still in class and the room was empty. As soon as the last member arrived, Dumbledore decided to address them.

"This is a great day and a sad day, many people will die tonight, some good, some bad, but I wanted all of you to remember something; we're fighting so our children and grand children and great grand children won't have to. We're fighting so people all over the world, magical and muggle alike will not have to suffer. We're fighting for honor, for decency, for love. But most importantly, we're fighting for good. No matter what happens, we have already won. We banded together; Gryffindor, Slytherin, Hufflepuff and Ravenclaw, we are united as one for a common good. When you go out there, hold your head up high, you are all Hogwarts champions." Dumbledore announced to a roar from the group.

Arthur and Dumbledore led the way out of the castle and into the Quidditch pitch. Ron and Hermione held hands as they followed closely behind. The rest just walked proudly.

When they arrived, there were over two hundred Dark Aurors, five hundred elves; all clad in their battle dress uniforms, three hundred witches and wizards from Great Britain, Hagrid, Grawp and one female vampire.

Ron went straight to Dumbledore who was introducing the vampire to the Minister.

"This is RJ, an old friend of mine, RJ, this is Arthur Weasley; the Minister of Magic." Dumbledore introduced them.

"Pleased to meet you," she said warmly.

"The honor is mine; any friend of Albus' is a friend of mine." He replied, shaking her hand, which was icy cold.

"Where are the rest of the wizards?" Ron asked Dumbledore.

"I don't know, they must be late," Dumbledore said dismissively.

"I don't like this." Ron said quietly.

"Headmaster!" McGonagall bellowed as she hurried towards him. "An urgent message, just delivered by owl," she said, handing him the parchment.

Dumbledore read the note with absolutely no expression on his face. "The rest aren't coming." He announced.

"Why those slimy bast..." Ron was cut off by Hermione.

"Does it say why?" Hermione asked.

"Yes, it says they want to protect their families in case we fail." Dumbledore answered, handing the note to Arthur.

"Well what are we going to do now, we'll need an army." Ron said.

"We'll have to make due with what we have." Arthur said sadly.

"I can help." Hagrid announced.

"You Hagrid, can you get us an army?" Hermione asked.

"Yeah, a big one." He answered.

"Then go, we need them now." Ron ordered, and Hagrid went towards his cabin.

"Colin, where's your brother?" Ron asked.

"Here I am sir," Dennis answered.

"I have an important job for you; I want you to apparate to the roof of the Three Broomsticks, and watch the street. The enemy will probably use Hogsmeade as a staging point, and I want to know the moment anyone or anything arrives." Ron commanded.

"Yes sir." Dennis answered and vanished.

“Professor McGonagall, get all the students to their houses.” Ron ordered; McGonagall looked at Dumbledore who nodded. “Elves, inside the castle and protect the students until the goblins arrive.” The elves all vanished with a loud pop. “Giant division to the village,” they vanished immediately. “Wolf division, to the battlements, the rest, to your assigned seats,” Ron commanded. Even the Minister and Dumbledore did as they were ordered.

As soon as everyone was in their place, carriages from Hogsmeade began to arrive. Inside there was every major Ministry official and his or her families. The extremely wealthy from every magical community in Britain as well as Ministers from other countries were also among the invited.

Dumbledore stood and waved a hand at the Quidditch pitch, and a covered statue appeared in the middle.

The seats of the pitch were magically lowered so that the guests could have a better view. Arthur wanted to make sure everyone would be able to see Voldemort’s demise.

By sundown, all two hundred guests had arrived, including members of the international press. This was by far the largest event of the Minister’s administration.

Dumbledore waited until the very last person took their seat before he spoke.

“Ladies and Gentlemen: I welcome you all to Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, the new home of the Harry Potter Memorial. At the Minister’s behest, we will keep all speeches down to a minimal until after the statue has been unveiled, so until then, I give you the Minister of Magic, Arthur Weasley.” Dumbledore announced.

During the obligatory applause, Arthur made his way to the center of the Quidditch pitch, with all the noise, and the standing ovation, hardly anyone noticed a young boy apparate next to Ron.

“He’s here,” Dennis told Ron.

“How many does he have with him?” Ron whispered.

“None, he’s alone.” Dennis answered.

“Alone? He must be planning something, go back and wait.” He told Dennis.

Ron stood and got his father’s attention and simply nodded. Arthur knew exactly what that meant; Voldemort was on his way.

Arthur stalled by constantly thanking the audience for their warm welcome. When he could stall no more, he began his speech.

“Ladies and Gentlemen: I thank you all for the opportunity to speak to you before the unveiling of the monument. It took many men; many long hours to hand carve the statue, which as you know depicts Harry slaying Lord Voldemort.” The crowd gasped at his name. “On the very bottom, there’s an inscription that reads; ‘In honor of our champion and protector Harry Potter, his destruction of the Lord Voldemort on the night of the Vernal Equinox will reign forever as the greatest victory of good versus evil.’ Then it lists the names of all who fought the battle, and of course all of you who bore witness.” Arthur waited for his words to sink in.

“What are you saying Minister?” Arthur heard the lone voice of Rita Skeeter.

“Yes Minister, what are you saying?” A voice spat from behind him.

The crowd began to scream, but found they were trapped in the seating area.

“Lord Voldemort, thank you for accepting our gracious invitation.” Arthur said coldly.

“Yes, your invitation, I did accept it, but not as graciously as you might think. I noticed there is a security bubble in this arena, once you come in, you can’t get out. Believe me Minister, I will get out.” Voldemort said coldly.

“Maybe not Tom,” Dumbledore said, entering behind Voldemort.

"My old teacher, how nice of you to join the Minister in his time of death," Voldemort said with a cold laugh.

"I don't think the Minister is going to die, and neither am I." Dumbledore said calmly.

"You can't win Tom, there are too many of us." Dumbledore added.

Sirius, Cho, Colin and Ron appeared out of the blue, Cho was holding Sirius' arm.

"Old man, you don't think this small band of misfits and mudbloods can defeat the greatest sorcerer that ever lived!" Voldemort said with his voice rising.

"No, we can't defeat Harry, but we're not fighting him." Ron said as coldly as Voldemort himself.

"And where is your champion now, lying dead in his castle." Voldemort said, but the group all smiled at him. "Oh you thought I meant the poison, no, I dispatched my ten best Death Eaters to Potter Castle before I arrived at Hogsmeade, he and everyone in the castle should be dead by now." Voldemort said with a sinister smile.

The faces of the group began to fall. Could what he was saying be true? They were almost completely defenseless there, and he knew it.

"Did I burst your bubble?" Voldemort asked laughing. "But I'm not done yet, I have a little surprise for all of you, it's called a port key." Voldemort spat.

Immediately the grounds around the Quidditch pitch were filled with Death Eaters, giants, trolls, vampires, goblins and werewolves in their human state.

"One thousand port keys, I've been busy." Voldemort laughed.

"Yeah Tom, so have I." Ron spat, taking his father by the arm, Cho took Sirius and Colin took Dumbledore, and they all vanished.



Instantly, one hundred and fifty Dark Aurors appeared with a giant on each arm. The Unas clan went straight at the other giants, and the Dark Aurors began their guerilla tactics of attacking the wizards.

The elves appeared and began killing any and every goblin they could find.

The Dark Aurors on the battlements began banishing silver knives towards those they knew were werewolves.

The three hundred witches and wizards began attacking the vampires.

Ron stood next to Hermione; he didn't want her out of his sight. They fought any manner of creature that presented themselves before them.

Ron froze. "Do you hear that?" He asked Hermione. The sound of the battle was deafening, all she could hear were the sounds of people screaming.

"I don't hear anything!" She yelled back to him.

"That clicking sound, in the background," he specified as he killed another Death Eater.

Hermione listened as best she could, then suddenly the sound grew closer.

"What is that?" She asked confused.

"I know what that it is, I heard it in our second year." Ron pointed towards the edge of the forest. "Spiders!" He yelled.

Hermione looked, coming out of the Forbidden Forest were thousands of large, ferocious spiders, each twice the size of a man. And leading them out was the largest spider Hermione had ever imagined.

"It's Aragog!" Ron yelled.

Hermione knew instantly it was the spider that tried to kill Ron and Harry in their second year at Hogwarts. As she watched, Hagrid would tell Aragog who to kill, and then he would click his pinchers, and the smaller spiders would attack.

The spiders were relentless, for every spider the enemy tried to kill; fifty more would attack from every side.

The only ones who stood a chance against them were the giants and the trolls, with their monstrous size; they managed to fight off the arachnids easily. But they had problems of their own; the Unas clan.

The Unas clan lived up to their reputation of being warriors; they were attacking the other giants and the trolls from every direction. Though they did sustain heavy casualties, their spirit did not falter, and they continued to fight with honor.

The battle waged on for hours, Voldemort stood in the center of the Quidditch pitch laughing at the spectacle that was shown before him.

“Time for stage two,” Voldemort yelled, and another thousand wizards appeared out of nowhere.

Ron watched as they appeared on the lawns of the castle. He immediately ordered all the Dark Aurors off the battlements, and into the battle. When Ron turned his attention back to the battle, he noticed something that made his face turn white. Hermione was lying on the floor next to him.

Ron picked her up quickly, and apparated to the hospital wing of Hogwarts. The room was already overflowing with wounded, but Ron ignored the rest, and took Hermione to Madam Pomfrey.

“Take care of her now,” Ron commanded, Pomfrey just nodded.

Ron apparated back into the thick of things, he began fighting more viciously than the spiders. He gave them no mercy; killing curse after killing curse, Ron was picking off the enemy left and right.

Ron almost fell over when the hood of one of the commanding Death Eaters fell off his head.

“Ludo Bagman?” Ron asked disgusted.

“Commander Weasley.” Ludo greeted him as he raised his wand and hit Ron in the chest.

Dennis Creevey, having seen Ron hit, walked almost casually up to Ludo, pointed his wand at his chest, and screamed “Avada Kedavra.”

Ludo fell dead on the spot.

Dennis picked Ron up, and did as Ron had done before, took him to Madam Pomfrey and ordered him to be taken immediately.

“He’s the Commander and Chief of the Dark Aurors, take him NOW.” Dennis yelled at Pomfrey.

The battle waged on, the spectators sat and watched horrified at all the dead bodies lining the outside of the arena.

Voldemort had apparently grown weary of being a spectator, and decided it was time to join in the battle.

He began a barrage of spells at the added protection of the bubble surrounding the Quidditch pitch, but nothing got through.

“You can’t get out Tom.” Dumbledore said from behind him.

“You’re wrong old man, I will get out.” Voldemort argued.

“You’re losing the battle, your followers are dying, soon you’ll be all alone, with just me to contend with.” Dumbledore said calmly.

“Ah, but what you don’t know, my old teacher, is that I have the added power of Salazar Slytherin’s ring.” Voldemort said proudly, holding up the ring.

Dumbledore laughed. “Yes, Harry spent almost thirty whole galleons on it when he came up with the idea of tracking you.” Dumbledore said smiling.

“You lie old man, you were all guarding it, now I have it.” Voldemort said unsurely.

“Harry knew the instant Percy arrived with the necklace you gave him, Harry is not a fool.” Dumbledore argued.

“Was a fool, Potter is dead.” Voldemort spat.

“Oh, I doubt that, he had several people protecting him, I doubt your Death Eaters could have gotten to him.” Dumbledore continued.

“A housewife and her daughters are no match for MY Death Eaters.” Voldemort bellowed.

Voldemort began shooting spells at Dumbledore, the Headmaster of Hogwarts moved effortlessly out of the way, though not being trained in advanced apparition made it much more difficult for him.

The two exchanged constant volleys, neither one was getting the upper hand on the other until Voldemort saw an opportunity he had not noticed, the Potter Memorial was still on the pitch.

Voldemort positioned himself so that Dumbledore would be behind the statue. He then sent three spells simultaneously, the first two were designed to ensure Dumbledore remained behind the statue, and the third knocked the statue on top of him.

In the two seconds it took Dumbledore to remove the solid gold statue, Voldemort yelled “Expelliarmus.” Dumbledore had been disarmed.

Voldemort began to gloat.

“You’re too old Albus, I have defeated you.” Voldemort said smugly as he approached the Headmaster.

“I can be defeated, but so can you Tom, you still can’t get out.” Dumbledore said from under the statue.

“Maybe not, but I will have the honor of killing you.” Voldemort said shortly.

Voldemort raised his wand; he was just about to finish Dumbledore off, when a young girl of six or seven appeared between Voldemort and Dumbledore.

Voldemort stared into a pair of the bluest blue eyes he had ever seen. If it were still possible, Voldemort would have been afraid.

“Move little girl, or die.” Voldemort spat.

“You will not hurt my Uncle Albus.” She said in her small voice.

“And who is going to stop me?” Voldemort asked amused.

“I am,” the little girl answered.

“And who are you?” Voldemort asked, still very much amused.

“I am Cindy Potter; future Baroness of Lee, heiress to the Baron of Lee; Harry James Potter, and adopted descendant of Godric Gryffindor.” Cindy said proudly, her voice projected throughout Hogwarts and Hogsmeade.

“Ah, so you’re Harry’s daughter, I am so glad I have the honor of killing you first.” Voldemort said raising his wand again. “Avada Kedarva,” He yelled.

A green beam of light erupted out of his wand towards Cindy. Cindy just raised her left hand, palm out, and the beam dissipated in her grasp. Voldemort could not move; he was speechless; he attempted the curse again with the same result.

“I’m taking my Uncle Albus and we’re leaving.” Cindy announced.

She bent down, touched his leg, and they both vanished.

“NO!” Voldemort yelled, angrier than he had ever been.

He began sending curses in every direction, hoping to find a weakness in his prison. Then he found it. Towards a row of seats on the east side of the pitch the barrier was weakening. He repeatedly sent various curses designed to destroy until the barrier collapsed.

"I told you old man, I can escape." He said to the empty pitch.

"But you will still die." He heard a voice from behind him.

Voldemort turned quickly to see who was speaking, his face dropped, as did his wand.

"Potter."

## Chapter 15

Harry was standing in front of Voldemort wearing all black robes of no markings. He was carrying a long, finely detailed wooden box, measuring one and one half meters long by half a meter wide and ten centimeters deep. The lid of the box was hinged and the opposite side held two identical clasps at either end.

"Hello Tom, you seem surprised to see me." Harry said.

"Evidently my Death Eaters did not accomplish their mission." Voldemort spat.

"Are you kidding, they didn't even make it passed my 6 year old daughter." Harry said with a laugh.

The two mortal enemies stared at each other; Harry wore an expression of supreme indifference while Voldemort wore one of extreme curiosity.

"What are we to do now Harry, you know our wands cannot fight each other." Voldemort asked calmly.

"Wands? I don't need wands, but fighting with magic would be pointless anyway, you cannot die by magical means. Yes Tom, I know your secret; I know you're an animagus, a magical animagus. I know you're a phoenix, I know a phoenix cannot die by magic. I know you maintain yourself semi-transfigured. I know you can be reborn from your own ashes. But most importantly Tom, I know how to defeat you." Harry explained.

"Is that a fact Harry, I sincerely hope you are not boasting, I would love the opportunity to see you try and fail." Voldemort answered back, conveying no emotion.

"You should know by now I'm not going to lie to you, you've become adept at determining the truth in every lie. Unlike you Tom, I never underestimate my opponents." Harry answered calmly.

“What do you have in the box, a gift for me perhaps?” Voldemort said playfully.

“As a matter of fact Tom, it is.” Harry said warmly.

Harry laid the box on the floor, and proceeded to open the lid. When it opened, it revealed two magnificent swords; one with rubies on its handle the other with emeralds, the two swords were identical in length and blade type, save for the writing on the blade itself; the first read ‘Godric Gryffindor’ and the other read ‘Salazar Slytherin.’

Harry lifted the Slytherin sword and marveled at its beauty.

“Beautiful isn’t it? Slytherin’s sword, a magnificent sword, do you know it cost me one hundred thousand Galleons?” Harry asked, looking up at Voldemort. “I guess not, I bought it just for you. I believe in fair play, you should have the same opportunity to defeat me as I have to defeat you.” Harry explained.

“Just like Slytherin’s ring?” Voldemort asked icily.

“No Tom, that was a tracking device, I had to keep an eye on you.” Harry answered with a laugh.

“How can I believe that’s Slytherin’s sword?” Voldemort asked more calmly.

Harry smiled warmly up at Voldemort, and then threw the sword at him; handle first. When Voldemort caught it, the green emeralds began to glow brightly.

“I guess you are the heir of Salazar Slytherin after all. You know, up until now, I never quite believed it.” Harry observed.

Voldemort felt a rush of power like he had never felt before. He was holding the sword of his ancestor; he was holding the sword of Slytherin.

“It’s real.” Voldemort said simply.



"I have no reason to lie to you. If I'm to fight with Godric Gryffindor's sword, it is only fitting you fight with Salazar Slytherin's." Harry happily explained.

Voldemort began getting a feel for the sword; he swung it in all directions, using both hands then strong hand, then weak hand. Harry was impressed at the old man's ability and agility.

"Very impressive Tom, I didn't know you could handle a sword with such skill." Harry complimented him.

"There is much you don't know about me, Harry, very much." Voldemort responded.

"Well, these people have been waiting a long time to see this battle, what do say to getting it under way?" Harry asked, picking up Gryffindor's sword.

"I couldn't agree more." Voldemort agreed.

Neville was now commanding the Dark Aurors, combined with Hagrid and his spider army, they had managed to kill or drive off all the dark wizards and witches. The elves had only just killed the last of the goblins, and the Unas clan was still battling the other giants and the trolls.

"Tonks, concentrate on the Vampires and werewolves." He commanded her.

She, in turn, began barking out orders to the other Dark Aurors, who immediately began bombarding the vampires with shards of wood, and the werewolves with the silver knives they removed from other dead werewolves.

Neville turned to command Hagrid to set the spiders on the trolls when a wand was suddenly pointed at his face. His mind went blank, all his training left him, he was that scared little boy from first year. "Avada," Neville never heard the rest of the curse, all he saw was a brilliant green light, and the dark witch thrown seventy-five meters into the Forbidden Forest. When he looked to see who had saved him, he smiled brightly.

“Thank you my love.” Neville said to Luna.

“You are welcome my love.” She responded kissing him sensually.

“Maybe we should wait until after the battle.” Neville said, prying himself from her mouth.

“If you insist,” she said smiling.

Neville ordered Hagrid to set the spiders loose on the trolls. By the time the troll screams could be heard, they were all dead. Each troll was attacked by no less than five hundred spiders; there was nothing left on their bones.

Neville nodded to Hagrid, who dismissed the spiders, and they reentered the forest. The Unas clan decimated the other giants, and the Dark Aurors finished off the vampires, werewolves and dark wizards, the battle was over.

Neville looked around at all the dead bodies. Most were the enemy, but many still, were his own people or allies. The Unas clan lost more than half their clan, the elves lost a hundred and sixty of their number, and the three hundred wizards and witches that aided the battle all died.

Neville was about to order the policing of the bodies, when he heard a sound he hadn't noticed before, cheering from the Quidditch pitch.

He led the Dark Aurors to the pitch to find Harry and Voldemort standing toe to toe with swords in their hands.

“It seems your dark creatures have been defeated Tom, it's just you and me.” Harry said tauntingly.

“But I'm still alive Harry, and I plan on remaining that way.” Voldemort retorted before striking the first blow.

Harry quickly reverted to the swordsmanship training he had received in one of the other timelines. Harry's skill with a sword was undisputed. He quickly raised his sword to block Voldemort, then spun his body underneath, and ended up behind him.

“Very good Harry, it would seem you were not boasting after all.” Voldemort said impressed.

“I think my allies would appreciate the show, do you mind?” Harry asked, referring to removing the protective dome.

“Not at all Harry, but aren’t you worried I’ll transfigure into a phoenix and escape?” Voldemort asked as he moved around to Harry’s left.

“You want this to end as much as I do Tom, you won’t escape. Besides, I put anti-transfiguration wards on the school grounds, whatever way you entered is the only way you can leave.” Harry explained.

The Slytherin and Gryffindor swords began clanging as their masters swung them back and forth. Harry remained on the defense, easily blocking all the volleys from Voldemort. People began cheering and rooting Harry on. He made no attempt to go on the offense.

Harry was beginning to tire from battle; Voldemort seemed as fresh as when he started. The poison was starting to get to him, the blocks were becoming slower, his moves more erratic. Harry was starting to lose.

Voldemort saw this as the perfect opportunity; he swung the sword with one hand and pulled out Dumbledore’s wand with the other.

“Impedimenta!” Voldemort yelled.

The spell hit Harry in the chest and froze him in place for only a split second, but it was long enough for Voldemort to run the sword through Harry’s stomach and out his back.

Blood began to flow from both his abdomen and lower back. Harry dropped to his knees.

Harry had no strength left; the poison and the laceration had him almost completely immobile.

Voldemort raised his sword and swung it at Harry’s neck.

Madam Pomfrey was going from bed to bed in the hospital wing of Hogwarts informing her patients of whether or not there was any permanent damage.

Hermione was sitting up in her camp bed, behind the privacy screen. McGonagall was sitting next to her, informing her that Voldemort's forces had been defeated and only Voldemort was left.

"Can the professor defeat him?" Hermione asked seriously.

"I'm afraid I don't know, they are both very powerful wizards, but I'm hoping for the best." McGonagall explained.

Pomfrey stepped in from behind the screen.

"May I have a word with you Miss Granger?" She asked emotionlessly.

"Of course Madam Pomfrey, have a seat." Hermione said, trying desperately to hide her fear.

"I mean in private." Pomfrey clarified, staring at McGonagall.

"It's alright; you can talk in front of the Professor." Hermione said, really wanting her there for support.

Pomfrey sat in the opposite chair from McGonagall, she looked down at a parchment she had in her hands.

"I have some bad news." She announced sadly.

McGonagall took Hermione's hand.

"Yes?" Hermione pressed.

"I'm afraid the spell you were hit caused a great deal of internal damage that couldn't be repaired. I'm afraid you'll never have children." Pomfrey said sadly.

Hermione began to tear up quickly.

"Never? I'll never be a mother." She said crying.

Hermione lost all semblance of composure and began to cry hysterically. It was worse than death to Hermione, she had always dreamed of bearing children, of raising them, now her dream was destroyed.

"You can still be a mother dear, you'll just have to adopt." McGonagall tried to console her and failed miserably.

"Who'll want to marry me?" Hermione asked through her sobs.

"What a silly thing to ask, I'm sure Ron will want to marry you, he truly loves you." McGonagall continued.

"His parents have so many children, he'll never be happy with me." Hermione argued hysterically.

Pomfrey stood and left Hermione's bedside. She continued giving bad news to the injured. She walked over to where Ron was lying motionless on his camp bed, without the privacy of the screen. She just shook her head, and walked away.

Dennis Creevey came running into the room.

"Harry's back, he's alive, and he's fighting Voldemort!" Dennis yelled.

All those who were capable of moving ran to an available window to see the battle.

Hermione quickly forgot about her problem, and ran out from behind the screen. When she was almost at the window, she screamed.

"Ron!" She said running to his bed. "Is he all right?" She yelled to the room.

Madam Pomfrey ran over to her and Ron. "Yes dear, he'll be fine. Maybe some short term paralysis, but no permanent damage." Pomfrey assured her.

"Oh thank God." Hermione sobbed.

She sat at his bedside for only a few moments before running to the window, but what she saw almost made her collapse.

Harry was kneeling before Voldemort, as Voldemort was swinging his sword towards Harry's neck.

"NO!" Hermione screamed.

Voldemort's aim was perfect. The middle of the sword was perfectly aligned with Harry's throat, when Voldemort finished his swing; he heard the collective scream from the audience and smiled.

"Potter is dead." He said softly.

When Voldemort looked down, his smiled left, as apparently did Harry.

"NO!" Voldemort screamed even louder than Hermione.

"Hello Tom." Harry said from behind Voldemort.

When Voldemort turned around, he had just enough time to see the sword approach his neck, but no time to move.

The Gryffindor blade severed his neck quickly and cleanly.

"Good bye Tom." Harry said as he finished his swing.

Tom Marvolo Riddle was dead.

Immediately a powerful wave of warm air emanated from Voldemort's dead body that spread omni-directionally and was felt by every witch and wizard on the planet. A great evil had been destroyed.

A spirit began to rise from Voldemort's body and took shape.

"I told you Harry, I cannot die, a phoenix cannot be killed even by muggle weapons." The ghost of Voldemort said with satisfaction.

"Tom, do you remember Myrtle?" Harry asked pleasantly, motioning to the ghost that was just above him carrying a U shaped stone. "Well Myrtle remembers you." Harry continued when Voldemort did not

answer. "She was quite upset when your basilisk killed her, and she wanted to say hi." Harry explained.

Moaning Myrtle just smiled at Voldemort. "Hello Tom." She said as she threw the U shaped stone at Voldemort's ghost.

As the stone passed around Voldemort he disappeared. When it hit the ground, it shattered.

"That Tom," Harry said to Voldemort's lifeless body, "was the Gateway to the Wait of the Dead, enjoy your stay." Harry finished, dropping down on both knees.

Neville ran the length of the pitch to Harry, but before he could even touch him, a little girl appeared.

"Hi Neville." Cindy said before touching Harry's body and disappearing.

Neville picked up Voldemort's severed head, and held it up to the Dark Aurors.

"VOLDEMORT IS DEAD!" Neville screamed with his voice amplified so loud that he was heard clearly all the way to Hogsmeade.

Ron awoke at nine o'clock the next morning; the hospital wing was filled with sleeping patients. He looked around carefully for Hermione, but didn't notice her right away.

"Well, judging by the fact that everyone is sleeping peacefully, we must have won." Ron said to himself.

"Yes sir we did." Draco said, sitting down next to Ron.

"Dumbledore beat him." Ron said in an obvious tone.

"No, Harry did." Draco corrected him.

"Harry! Harry beat Riddle, excellent." Ron said excitedly.

"We don't know how excellent yet, Voldemort did stab him through the stomach, all the way through." Draco said quietly.

"Is he all right?" Ron asked concernedly.

"No one other than the Minister knows; the rest of us can't apparate to the castle." Draco explained.

Ron concentrated for a moment, and then relaxed.

"I can't either." Ron declared.

"The Dark Aurors are just sitting around here waiting for word, me inclusive." Draco said.

"Is Hermione all right?" Ron asked, hoping he knew.

"She seems to be, I saw her about four o'clock this morning, she was pacing the room. I heard Madam Pomfrey was starting to get upset by it." Draco said with a laugh.

"Is she still here?" Ron asked looking around.

"Yeah, she's behind that curtain." Draco said, pointing to the far end of the room.

"I'd better go check up on her." Ron said, attempting to stand and falling. "What's wrong with me, I can't stand?" Ron asked nervously.

"I heard you are going to be temporarily paralyzed, don't worry, it'll pass." Draco said helping Ron back onto the bed.

"Do you know how long?" Ron asked.

"Nope, sorry." Draco answered.

"Do you have the final numbers?" Ron asked, realizing he hadn't thought of the casualties.

"Are you sure you want to hear them?" Draco verified.

"No, but give them to me anyway." Ron said.



"We lost one hundred and seventy seven giants, one hundred and sixty one house elves, all three hundred regular wizards and eighty nine Dark Aurors." Draco said sounding remorseful.

"Any of the Dark Aurors Hogwarts students?" Ron pressed.

Draco nodded sadly. "We lost Justin, Susan Bones, Amanda Drake and her brother Bill." Draco said solemnly.

"Do we know about everyone in here, are they going to be all right?" Ron continued his barrage of questions.

"I don't know, Pomfrey won't tell me." Draco explained.

"How about Dumbledore?" Ron asked.

"Saved by your goddaughter." Draco said with a smile.

Ron smiled at the thought of Cindy saving Dumbledore in front of all those people.

"That's my girl." Ron said proudly.

"And the enemy?" Ron continued.

"All the Death Eaters, werewolves, giants and trolls are dead. Seventy five goblins, a hundred Diablo's and ten vampires escaped." Draco answered calmly.

"And one Dark Lord dead." Ron added.

"And one Dark Lord dead." Draco agreed.

"Hi guys." Hermione said, walking over to them.

Her eyes were bloodshot and she looked like she hadn't slept in days.

"Oh 'Mione, come here." Ron said lovingly and she hugged him tightly.

"It's over, it's finally over." Hermione whispered into his ear.

"I know baby, I know." Ron said softly.

"Has Draco told you everything?" Hermione asked pulling away from Ron.

"Yeah, the losses were bad, but he and his followers are dead, so at least there's reason to celebrate.

Hermione just nodded, she didn't want to have to explain her condition to him.

"Your father's making a speech here at Hogwarts at eleven today." Hermione announced.

"Is he still at Harry's?" Ron asked.

"Yeah, he told me he'd come straight here before the speech." Hermione explained.

"You should be at his side." Draco said to Ron.

Ron looked up at him. "And you at my side." Ron said honestly.

Draco smiled.

Arthur arrived at ten forty five in the hospital wing. Most of the patients were awake and talking animatedly about the battle from the previous night. Arthur went directly to Ron, Hermione and Draco who were in a corner together.

Arthur walked up to Hermione and hugged her, and gave her a small kiss on the cheek, then hugged Ron tightly, and finally shook Draco's hand.

"Harry's hanging on by a thread, between the loss of blood and the poison already in his body, we all feared the worst, but he's stronger than we all give him credit for." Arthur announced.

"Is he going to make it?" Hermione asked tentatively.

"We're not sure, but his healer Sarah believes he will." Arthur said, starting to smile.

"Oh thank God." Hermione declared.

“Ron, I have to ask you something before my speech, it’s very important.” Arthur said imperatively.

“Sure dad, what is it?” Ron asked.

“I want to announce you as the Minister of Dark Magic Enforcement, would you accept the position?” Arthur asked his son.

“Isn’t it an elected position?” Hermione asked confused.

“No, this will be the first Minister, so it’s an appointed position.” Arthur clarified.

“Yes, I’ll accept it.” Ron said without any doubt.

“Excellent son, you’ll have to choose a Deputy Minister before you join me outside.” Arthur pointed out.

“Hermione,” Ron asked.

“No thank you Ron, I’m done with the Dark Aurors.” Hermione said honestly.

“Then if it’s all right with you dad, I’d like to choose Neville Longbottom.” Ron answered. “And I’d like to name Draco Malfoy as the CNC.” Ron added.

“Really, me,” Draco asked.

“I can’t think of anybody better suited for the job.” Ron said honestly.

“I accept.” Draco said happily, shaking both Ron and Arthur’s hands.

“Draco, can you fetch me Neville please?” Ron asked.

“Back in a flash,” Draco answered apparating away.

“Time to go son,” Arthur said standing.

Hermione conjured and enchanted chair, and helped Ron into it.

They followed Arthur through the castle and out onto the lawn where only the night before it was littered with dead bodies. Neville and Draco met them along the way.

“Neville,” Ron began, “would you accept the honor of being the Deputy Minister of Dark Magic Enforcement?” Ron asked officially.

“Serious? Hell yes,” Neville exclaimed.

“Then I want you on my right and Draco, who I’m naming as the CNC on my left as we exit.

When the five exited the castle they saw a sight that made them all stand, except for Ron, in awe, five thousand witches and wizards from all over Europe made their way to the castle lawn to hear the Minister’s speech.

Snape met them half way to the podium.

“May I have the honor of announcing you Minister?” Snape asked.

“Thank you son,” Arthur answered smiling.

Severus turned and walked straight up to the podium.

“Ladies and Gentlemen, allow me to introduce my father in law, and our Minister of Magic; Arthur Weasley,” Snape announced proudly.

All five thousand people began applauding and cheering as loud as they could.

Arthur waited for them to finish before he began.

“My fellow wizards and witches welcome to Hogwarts, as you all felt last night; the Lord Voldemort is dead, completely and unequivocally dead. Last night Voldemort stormed this school with thousands of evil creatures, but the Ministry was ready for them, only a small percentage of these creatures escaped alive, the rest have been destroyed, no prisoners were taken.” The group began cheering at the thought of taking no prisoners. “The very much alive, Harry Potter personally killed Voldemort, he even managed to banish his spirit, the

Dark Lord is completely gone.” The group began cheering again. “Our side did sustain heavy casualties, and the names of each of the dead will be displayed on a memorial which we will dedicate at the commencement ceremonies this June here at Hogwarts where the brave fought and died for you. Today, I would also like to finally appoint the Minister of Dark Magic Enforcement; I have chosen the man who stood on this field of battle and commanded the forces of good against the forces of evil; I mean my son, Ronald Weasley.” The group began cheering again. “Come up here Ron.” His father called to him.

“I unfortunately did not inherit my father’s affinity for speech making, but I would like to take a moment and appoint the Deputy Minister as well as the new Commander and Chief. For Deputy Minister I am appointing my longtime friend, Colonel Neville Longbottom.” The crowd cheered again. “For the position of Commander and Chief, I am appointing my longtime nemesis, who has grown to be one of my best friends; Major Draco Malfoy.” The crowd was stunned into silence. “Draco has proven himself beyond ANY doubt that he not only knows the difference between right and wrong, he stood on the field of battle to fight for it.” Ron said re-stunning the crowd into applause. “Thank you.” Ron finished.

“Thank you son,” Arthur said, retaking the podium. “I would like you all to take a moment of silence in remembrance of those who died here last night.” Arthur waited a few moments. “Thank you all for coming, I will make myself available for questions later in the day.” Arthur said, stepping down to deafening applause.

The international press went around from person to person asking various participants for their view of what happened the night before. Ron, Neville and Draco never noticed that Hermione vanished that morning not speaking to anyone.

The week following the final battle left Hogwarts as the center of attention, people were arriving on a pilgrimage to see the spot where Voldemort had been killed. Dumbledore was forced to suspend classes because of the influx of people.

The Dark Aurors who were still Hogwarts students were forced to seek refuge at Potter Castle, much to their elation. Harry continued his solitude, he remained in his bedroom and only Ginny, Cindy, Gabrielle, Arthur and Molly could pass through his privacy wards.

Hermione seemed very standoffish towards Ron; he assumed it had to do with some post traumatic stress, and paid it no mind, that is until the evening before they were to return to Hogwarts when Ron had a more pressing issue with Hermione.

Ron had arranged a quiet dinner just for the two of them on the northeast tower. He instructed Winky to make sure everything was special. He wanted the night to be perfect.

Ron met Hermione in the library and led her to the tower that night.

"What are you doing?" Hermione asked huffily.

"It's a surprise, trust me." Ron said mysteriously.

When Ron opened the door that led out to the tower where the dinner was to be held, Hermione began to cry softly.

"What's all this?" She asked hoarsely.

"Just dinner," Ron answered evasively.

He sat her down on one side and himself on the other. Winky appeared wearing a beautiful white laced dress, and matching hat, she set the trays of food she had levitating behind her on the table and began to serve them, Hermione was smiling from ear to ear.

"Since when did you become a romantic?" Hermione asked, eating a bite of the filet mignon.

"Since I thought I lost you," Ron began, almost in a whisper, "I was so scared you had died, so scared you wouldn't wake up, I decided to devote my life to making you happy." Ron answered romantically.

"Oh Ron, I know you love me, and I love you too, but there is something I have to tell you." Hermione said, now sounding sad.

“No wait, I want to go first.” Ron got off his seat, and bent down on one knee in front of Hermione. “Hermione, would you do this big oaf the honor of marrying him.” Ron asked, opening a small box with a large diamond engagement ring inside.

The diamond was heart shaped of three karats with five smaller half-karat diamonds all around. Hermione knew immediately that it was completely muggle, no magic whatsoever.

“Oh Ron, I’m speechless, I don’t know what to say.” Hermione said, staring longingly at the ring.

“Say yes,” Ron recommended.

“I,” she faltered, “I can’t marry you, I’m sorry, I can’t marry anybody.” She said crying hysterically.

“What? What do you mean?” Ron asked stunned.

“I have to tell you something, the night of the battle, I was hurt,” she faltered again.

“We were all hurt, what are you talking about?” Ron pressed, starting to get agitated.

“I, I can’t have children.” Hermione finally admitted.

That hit Ron hard for a moment. The woman he wanted to marry could not have children. No diapers to change, no four a.m. feedings, no children squabbling over insignificant things. He didn’t care.

“So, I don’t want to marry your children, I want to marry you.” Ron said, taking her hand.

“You say that now, but I know you, you’ll want a big family just like yours, you’ll want five or six or seven kids, and then you’ll leave me.” Hermione argued, crying even more heavily.

“That’s silly ‘Mione, I only want you.” Ron said lovingly.

“You’re wrong; you’ll leave me the first chance you get.” Hermione yelled, running from the tower into the castle.

“Bugger,” Ron said to himself.

“Hello dear,” Molly said, entering Harry’s room.

“Hello Molly,” Harry said, delighted to have company.

“How are you feeling dear?” Molly asked warmly.

“Almost perfect,” Harry said honestly.

“Then don’t you think it’s time to get your lazy arse out of that bed and start to move around?” Molly asked, raising her voice slightly.

Harry was taken aback; Molly had never spoken to him like that, like, one of her own children.

Harry smiled. “Yes mum, right away,” he said, standing.

“That’s better Harry dear, now get dressed or I’ll be back up here and change you myself.” Molly threatened.

“Yes ma’am,” Harry said laughing.

Harry dressed for the first time since the battle, removed all the privacy wards on his wing of the castle, and walked downstairs.

He found all the Dark Aurors from Hogwarts sitting in his library.

“Harry,” they all yelled together.

“There they are; the hero’s of magic.” Harry said warmly.

After the obligatory hellos and well wishing, Harry noticed Ron sitting in a corner by himself. Harry excused himself and went over to him.

“Hey mate, what’s going on?” Harry asked, knowing something was wrong.

“I asked Hermione to marry me.” Ron answered without looking up.



"You did, congratulations," Harry said, patting him on the back.

"Don't congratulate me yet, she said no." Ron declared, still not looking up.

"What," Harry asked, scarcely believing his ears.

Ron looked up at him, it was evident he had been crying for quite a while.

"She got hurt in the battle; she can no longer have children, so she thinks I'll leave her eventually for someone who can." Ron explained.

"Oh, poor Hermione, but don't worry mate, it's probably just the initial shock of the news, just ask her again in a few weeks, I'm sure she'll say yes." Harry said surely.

"Thanks mate, you're probably right, I shouldn't be concerned yet, and I'll just ask her again the night before commencement." Ron said composing himself.

"Excellent, now, let me see the ring." Harry commanded, pushing out his hand. "Very nice, a heart shaped diamond, about three karats, exquisite." Harry said handing it back to him. "We'll make a romantic out of you yet Weasley." Harry added standing.

Dinner was more of a celebration than a meal. They had finally gotten all together after the battle and were able to eat and drink together. They repeatedly toasted the dead, and remembered each and every one of them by name. They were Dark Aurors, the best of the best.

The grounds of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry had never been so decorated. Volunteers from every country in Europe and South America arrived three days early to begin planning and decorating. This was a celebration of the graduating seventh years as well as a celebration of the defeat of Voldemort.

Arthur Weasley had the honor of the commencement and dedication speech, he had spent the night before going over it with his son Percy to ensure it was short and concise, he didn't want to take the spotlight

away from those who deserved it; the graduating class, those who fought and died and those who fought and lived.

The Minister arrived just before the ceremonies were due to begin; he arrived by magical limousine in front of the entrance to the school. When he exited the car, the crowd erupted into applause, but it was nothing compared to the applause his fellow passenger received.

Harry Potter exited the car with his wife Ginny, his daughter Cindy and his new ward, Gabrielle; they took their places next to Dumbledore and the Minister. The crowd did not let up their welcome, their savior had arrived, and they wanted him to know how they felt. It took Dumbledore to finally quiet them after twenty minutes.

“Please friends, we would like to begin the ceremonies.” Dumbledore said impatiently.

When the crowd finally quieted, Arthur stood at the podium, and addressed the crowd.

“Good evening ladies and gentlemen, we are here for three very specific reasons; the first is to congratulate the graduating seventh years from Hogwarts, Beaubatons, and Durmstrang. This has been a bitter sweet year for all of them, when they started Hogwarts seven years ago, they thought Voldemort was dead, but he wasn’t, he lived in secrecy until he brought himself up to full power and we wouldn’t have known if it weren’t for the bravery of a young fourth year student; Harry Potter. He had to live through the horror of Voldemort’s rebirth, and then had to live through the horror of nobody believing him, but he persevered. Now here are those same seventh years celebrating their graduation from their respective schools and Voldemort IS dead. I want to wish them the best in their coming endeavors, there is no Dark Lord out there to hinder your dreams, and his Death Eaters are dead and can cause you no harm. Go out into the world my fellow wizards and witches, be what you want, do what you want, but remember, the Dark Aurors will always be near. Congratulations!” Arthur waited for the applause to die down.

“The second reason we are here is to celebrate the victory of the Dark Aurors and their allies against the Dark Lord and his allies. Many have been permanently changed by the incident, war always

changes a man, but they will continue to fight the good fight, they will continue to protect the innocent, and they will continue to do their duties unto their death. I want you all to join me in saluting the brave men, women, elves, giants and others who fought to deliver you from the menace that has plagued our world. Ladies and gentlemen, I give you our hero's." Arthur pointed to the small crowd gathered on the right. And the crowd all stood and bowed to them.

"Lastly, we're here to dedicate a memorial in honor of the dead, the entire memorial, with all its solid gold accents was graciously donated by the Baron of Lee." Arthur waited until the confusion set in. "Harry Potter." Then the crowd understood, and began applauding. "The memorial lists in solid gold on black onyx, the names of everyone who both fought and died and fought and survived, ridding the evil that was Voldemort from this Earth, so if you'll join me in remembering them, I give you the 'Battle of Hogwarts Memorial'." Arthur said, pulling the cover off the large onyx wall.

Everyone bowed their heads for several minutes before looking up again.

"Thank you." Arthur finished.

The crowd burst again into applause, and the ceremony was over.

Harry excused himself from his family and went in search of Ron; Harry had been dying to know if Ron had re-asked Hermione, or if he chickened out.

Harry found Ron happily talking to Dean, Semus and Neville. They were talking about professional Quidditch, which made Harry laugh in spite of himself.

"Things are back to normal." He thought.

"Ron, you got a second?" Harry asked, waving Ron over.

"So, don't keep me in suspense, did you ask or not?" Harry asked expectantly.

"She said no." Ron said sadly.

“What, why,” Harry asked confused.

“Same reason, she really believes I’m going to leave her.” Ron explained.

“I’m so sorry mate, what are you going to do now?” Harry asked.

“Haunt her until she says yes.” Ron said smiling.

“Excellent,” Harry agreed.

“It’s over Harry,” Ron said suddenly.

“No Ron, it’s not over, only this chapter.” Harry answered back

The two walked off towards the stage to talk to the reporters, life would be back to normal soon, but not today.

## Chapter 16

Harry Potter was famous before the Battle of Hogwarts, but became even more famous after. Four and one half years earlier, Harry fought to the death against the darkest wizard of all; Lord Voldemort.

Harry's life over the last few years had become decisively better, his beautiful wife Ginny, had a pair of twins on the summer solstice the year after the battle. His adopted daughter Cindy was growing into a beautiful young woman, and his friends and family were constantly around. He was in heaven.

Harry and his family resided in Lee Castle in Scotland; they had acquired it three month before the final battle. The Castle, which came with the title Baron; was Harry's move into the muggle world, he knew his enterprises in the magical community, though vast, would have to expand into the muggle community if it was to grow properly. Harry later used his title to engage in both capitalist enterprises and philanthropic enterprises.

The evening before his eldest child's eleventh birthday, Harry met his good friend and mentor Michael, the Magi. Michael was, for lack of a better term, strange. He would spend hours telling Harry how he couldn't interfere, and then allow Harry to decipher the answers. Michael was indeed a good friend, and Harry always looked forward to their meetings.

"So, what brings you to Scotland?" Harry asked, sitting behind his desk in his office.

"Oh, same as always, sticking my nose where it doesn't belong," Michael responded warmly.

"Here to find out if Cindy's going to Hogwarts?" Harry asked, but already knew the answer.

"Maybe," Michael responded, but gave Harry an affirmative look.

"I expect you want her to go." Harry pressed him for information.

"I can't tell you that." Michael said, nodding his head yes.

"I kind of figured, if she goes and completely disobeys her parents, and starts teaching her fellow classmates advanced sorcery, our kind will start to advance, finally allowing you all to leave this planet." Harry said knowingly.

"I would never agree to such a statement." Michael said, entirely unbelievably.

"I know, but I don't have an answer for you yet, Cindy's going to give me her answer tomorrow at breakfast." Harry explained.

"What do you think she'll do?" Michael asked.

"I think she'll go, there are no children around that are her age, she's been very lonely for playmates, so she'll probably go." Harry answered.

"Are you concerned?" Michael continued.

"Not really, I know she's going to disobey us, I know she's going to start teaching advanced sorcery, but I just hope it's in her fourth year or higher, she's still too young to try to teach." Harry said.

"We're not talking about Cindy, are we?" Ginny asked walking into the room.

"Ginny my love, you grow more beautiful every day." Michael said, standing and kissing Ginny lightly on the lips.

"And you grow more full of excrement every time I see you." Ginny joked back.

"Oh, now I'm hurt, shot down by the most beautiful witch in the world." Michael said jokingly.

"So are you talking about Cindy?" Ginny asked, sitting on her husband's lap.

“Yes we are; Michael wanted to know what Cindy chose.” Harry answered.

“And you explained your theory on her teaching others.” Ginny said, obviously overhearing.

“Yep,” Harry said, and then turned to Michael, “I love my wife, but she’s delusional, she thinks Cindy’s perfect and would never disobey us.” Harry said.

“I don’t think she’s perfect, I just think she would never disobey us about that.” Ginny clarified.

“I’ve known your daughter for over four years, and I agree with Harry, if she feels she’s doing the right thing, she’ll disobey you.” Michael said.

“Did he just give an opinion?” Ginny asked Harry disbelievingly.

“Why I do believe he did.” Harry mocked a surprised expression.

“Keep it up Potter, you may have killed the other Michael, but I’m much better than he was.” Michael joked back.

“That was sad.” Ginny said, thinking back.

“Sad but necessary Ginny, he had Time Dementia, he wanted to play God, and he would have gotten away with it, if it weren’t for Harry.” Michael said.

“But I never understood, how did you realize it?” Ginny asked Harry.

“Something he said after the battle; ‘nothing is as it seems’. I started thinking, the main players knew too much, me, Riddle, even Malfoy. How did they hijack that ship, how did they keep it moving and unplotable, how did Riddle know exactly where to strike the muggles, someone was feeding him information. Someone was playing us all.

Then the strangest thing happened, I called him on it, I asked him to repeat the story of how I told him to come back in time, he couldn’t remember it, or actually, he remembered it differently. The first time;

Hermione died and Ron went crazy, the second time; Ron died, and Hermione disappeared, something was wrong. I knew I couldn't get any answers from him, so I sought out this Michael, the one that's supposed to be in this timeline, and when I explained everything, he knew immediately; Time Dementia.

We set a trap for him a week later, and the truth began to come out, he decided to use me to advance the wizard race to the point where the Magi would think they were no longer needed, and he would have the run of the planet."

Harry was cut off by Ginny.

"So it was all a lie." She said.

"No not really," Michael cut in, "he probably was sent back by a future Harry, but all he was supposed to do was give Harry the information he required then vanish into the Wait of the Dead. But according to Harry, he kept coming back; he even helped Harry retrieve his godfather, and even more to the point, he instructed Harry to use the archway against Voldemort, then destroy it, leaving us cut off from the other timelines." Michael added.

"How do you mean?" Ginny asked.

"Well, we communicate inside the Wait of the Dead, have so for thousands of years, but with the archway destroyed, we would have been cut off and with no means of communicating with other dimensions, if we, in this reality, were to have seen the wizarding world evolve, we would have assumed we were no longer needed, and left.

Michael was cut off by Harry.

"Leaving Michael as the sole Magi." Harry added.

"But why would that have been such a big deal?" Ginny pressed.

"Ginny, my dear, one Magi; with a wave of his hand, can wipe out the entire wizarding world, and with Michael and his Time-Dementia, he would have made himself a god." Michael explained.



“So I forced him into a duel.” Harry stated.

“But why you,” Ginny pressed.

“Because under treaty, a Magi cannot kill another Magi in this universe, even if it’s me killing me.” Michael said.

“I’ll never understand it, even if you explained it a thousand more times.” Ginny said; sounding even more confused.

The grandfather clock struck twelve.

“I have to go, I’ll come by in a month or two, I’ll call your cell.” Michael said standing.

“Good bye old friend.” Harry said, embracing Michael.

“Good bye, take care of those beautiful children.” Michael said, hugging Harry back.

“And you, you gorgeous woman you, come here and give your old friend a treat.” Michael said, kissing Ginny again.

“Don’t be a stranger; the kids love it when you’re around.” Ginny said

And with a smile and a wave, Michael left Lee Castle.

“Alone at last,” Ginny said provocatively.

“Why Mrs. Potter, what could you possibly have in mind?” Harry asked playfully.

“Oh, I don’t know, a little of this, a little of that, a lot of sex.” Ginny answered, kissing Harry deeply.

“How did I ever get so lucky?” Harry asked.

“Because of me,” Ron said, entering the room.

“Ron, what are you doing here?” Ginny asked, as she hugged and kissed her brother.

“Probably back from some late night with one of your models.” Harry answered, hugging Ron as well.

“Actually yeah, but I’m here so I can give Cindy her gift before I leave for work in the morning.” Ron said, sitting down.

“You are coming to the party,” Ginny said rather than asked.

“Not if she’s going to be here.” Ron said, referring to Hermione.

“Oh come on Ron, you’re both Cindy’s godparents, the least you could do is spend her birthday with her together.” Ginny argued.

“Gin, I love you, but there is no way I’m going to sit in the same room with her when she’s turned down my marriage proposal twelve times.” Ron snapped.

“You know why she does it, you know she loves you more than she could possibly love another, you’ve got to give her another chance, it’s been two years.” Ginny continued arguing.

“Harry please, you understand, don’t you?” Ron said to Harry.

“Plan on getting me in trouble with my wife, are you? Well, I unfortunately agree with both of you. Ron, you should give Hermione another chance, but rather than rushing things, you should take it incredibly slow. You should treat her like any other date, then any other girlfriend, then any other lover, and finally, when she actually believes you’ll never leave her, then you ask her for the thirteenth time. But Hermione should stop her childish fears, and take a chance. She’s been teaching at Hogwarts for almost two full years, if she wants to end up like Minerva; old and bitter, well that’s her problem, and you should move on. But if she wants a chance at true happiness, then she should give you a chance.” Harry explained.

Ron was staring at him blankly. “I thought I was the politician, that I was supposed to give the long-winded speeches.” Ron said.

“Sorry, I’ve been giving so many speeches recently; I’m starting to give them in my sleep.” Harry apologized.

"I'll sleep on it; I'll just be in my room." Ron said standing.

"You will be here tonight." Ginny warned as he left. "And you'll make sure of it." Ginny added to Harry.

"Yes dear." Harry said nervously.

Cindy's birthday found the grounds of Lee Castle with a blanket of newly fallen snow. Ginny had planned a large party, inviting all their old friends, professors, and most importantly, her family.

The Weasley's, who typically spent all their time in Harry and Ginny's other castle; Potter Castle, were all apparating to Lee at noon that day. Ron luckily spent the night before.

Harry and Ron were up early that morning, and reminiscing about their time at Hogwarts. The two, whose lives went in such different directions, enjoyed every moment they could steal to talk.

"Oh, I almost forgot," Ron began, "Guess who I saw the other day." Ron said.

"I don't, know, who did you see?" Harry asked.

"Gilderoy Lockhart," Ron said laughing.

"Where did you see him?" Harry asked, thinking back to his second year.

"The ministry, apparently they released him from St. Mungo's, he's the new janitor." Ron said laughing harder.

"No more than he deserves, after trying to wipe our memories, which would have doomed Ginny and released another Riddle." Harry said angrily.

"He's apparently remembering small things, he remembered us in the chamber, the phoenix ride, he even remembered our visit to St. Mungo's in our fifth year." Ron explained.

“Well, as far as I’m concerned, he’s a dead issue.” Harry said, ending the conversation.

“What time is everyone due?” Ron asked, picking up on Harry’s unwillingness to talk about Lockhart.

“Midday, but most usually arrive earlier.” Harry answered.

“Hi daddy,” Cindy exclaimed as she ran into the room hugging her father.

“Happy birthday, sweetheart,” Harry responded, kissing her on top of the head.

“Uncle Ron,” she yelled, running over to him. “When did you get here?” She asked hugging him.

“Last night, I wanted to be the first one here.” Ron answered, kissing her on the cheek.

Cindy had grown into a beautiful young woman, she had long, flowing red hair, and deep green eyes and pale skin that made both her hair and eyes seem to pop out of her body.

“So, what did you get me?” Cindy asked impatiently.

“None of that Cindy, you’ll get your gifts at the party.” Harry interrupted.

“Ok,” she said dejectedly.

“Well, it’s the big day; do you have an answer for me?” Harry asked expectantly.

“Yes daddy, I do,” Cindy said, standing in front her father. “I want to go to Hogwarts.” She finally answered.

“Excellent, I’ll tell Aunt Minerva when she arrives. She’ll be very pleased.” Harry added.

“I know I’m pleased, you’ll have so much fun there.” Ron said, hugging his goddaughter.

“Go see if your mother needs any help.” Harry told Cindy. He waited until she left before turning back to Ron. “Of course she’ll have fun, she knows more than her teachers.” Harry said with a proud laugh.

“What, do you think she’ll be like us, getting into mischief I mean?” Ron asked.

“Like father like daughter.” Harry responded simply.

Midday approached quickly, the castle was starting to fill with guests, and Dumbledore was the first to arrive, since he had no prior commitments, but the rest arrived shortly after him.

They were all sitting around the dining room table, the dining room was nowhere as large as the one in Potter Castle, but was still large enough for the twenty people who were due to arrive.

When all the guests arrived, Harry decided to address the group; he got everyone’s attention, and then stood.

“Thank you friends and family for helping us celebrate Cindy’s eleventh birthday. We have all been looking forward to this day with great anticipation. Before the opening of the gifts, I wanted to make a small announcement; Cindy had decided to attend Hogwarts in the fall.” The group gave a small applause. “Some of you may end up being her teachers and I wanted to assure you she understands her place as a student.” Harry said looking at McGonagall. “So congratulations Cindy, I’m sure you’ll have a great seven years.” Harry added, kissing Cindy on top of the head. “Gift time,” he exclaimed.

The rest of the meal was spent on Cindy opening up her gifts. The group had apparently anticipated her decision, because many of the gifts had Hogwarts seals on them; including a muggle notebook, a custom quill and muggle clothes. Cindy was thrilled with all her gifts.

Snape and Peggy went over to Cindy carrying their godson Arthur.

“Are you excited about school?” Peggy asked.

“Oh, yes, mommy and daddy told me they had a great time in school. And I remember how much fun it was learning new spells.” Cindy said simply.

“Well, I don’t know how much more you can learn, but we’ll try to teach you.” Snape said pleasantly.

“Are you going to be one of my teachers, Uncle Severus?” Cindy asked excitedly.

“Yes I am, I teach Defense Against the Dark Arts.” Snape answered.

“And he’s the best.” Harry said, walking over and joining the conversation.

“Harry,” Peggy exclaimed, giving him a hug and kiss.

“Hello Peggy, Severus, how’s Hogwarts?” Harry asked, hugging Snape.

“Good, I truly enjoy being Deputy Headmaster, I can completely annoy the Gryffindor’s.” Severus said somewhat jokingly.

“Stop with the evil Slytherin attitude, I know you’re a good man, besides, if you weren’t, I would have never made you godfather to my only son.” Harry said, taking Arthur from Severus.

“And you’re lucky you take such wonderful care of my godson, or you’d have me to answer to.” Severus said, still only half joking.

“And now, my little birthday girl, for my gift.” Harry announced to Cindy.

Harry handed her a large rectangular package with ordinary brown paper. She quickly began to rip the paper off the box, and opened the lid.

“A Firebolt XP!” Cindy exclaimed.

“Now I know typically first year’s aren’t allowed to have their own broom, but Aunt Minerva said it would be all right, so long as you only

use it when the other students in your class use theirs.” Harry explained.

“Oh thank you daddy, its beautiful.” She said, running to her mother to show off her new broom.

“Do you think that’s wise Harry?” Snape asked.

“Wise, probably not, but I enjoyed giving it to her anyway. Besides, she’ll probably make the Quidditch team her first year, just like her daddy.” Harry said, prodding Snape.

“You were an adequate flyer.” Snape said smiling.

“Severus you old softie, I knew you loved me.” Harry said sarcastically.

After Cindy had shown off her new broom to her mother, a thought seemed to cross her mind.

“Where’s Aunt ‘Mione?” Cindy asked, noticing she wasn’t there.

“She’s covering for Uncle Severus and Aunt Minerva, she won’t be here until later.” Ginny said smiling.

“I’m going outside to try out my new broom, can you please tell me when she’s here?” Cindy asked in her cutest voice, the one she knew her mother would not resist.

“Sure dear, go have fun, but no tricks on the broom.” Ginny warned.

“Ok mommy,” Cindy added, as she hopped on the broom and did three loops, before flying out the window.

“Was I ever like that?” Ginny asked her mother.

Molly just stared at the window Cindy had just left from. “No one has ever been like that.” She said softly.

“You’re not nervous about her, are you mum?” Ginny asked.

"No, not nervous, just a little concerned. A young, adventurous girl with the powers most adult wizards only dream of, that's a bad combination, I just hope she'll suppress her powers during her time at Hogwarts." Molly explained.

"Me too," Ginny only verbally agreed with her mother, inside she fully expected Cindy to flourish.

"So where is my namesake?" Molly asked, looking around for the other twin.

By five o'clock, most of the guests had left, at Harry's request; Ron remained in spite of himself.

When the castle door opened, no one was surprised to see Hermione standing there.

"Mione," Harry exclaimed, taking her in a huge hug, and kissing her on the lips. "It's been too long." He added, taking her cloak.

"Well you know, school and all." Hermione said dismissively.

"Where's Cindy?" Hermione asked, looking around the room.

"Out flying on her father's present." Ginny said, hugging Hermione, and also kissing her on the lips.

"Where are the twins?" Hermione asked Ginny.

"With their namesakes, I can't get my parents to release them for a minute." Ginny said smiling.

"Well you know how they are, the twins are their first natural grandchildren." Hermione said, smiling back.

"Hello Hermione." Ron said, somewhat coldly.

"Hi Ron," Hermione answered, a little more excitedly than she wanted to.

"You're looking very nice." Ron said pleasantly.



"Thanks, you too." She retorted, with a glint in her eye.

When Hermione removed her school robes, the room fell silent. She had on muggle clothing; a tauntingly short skirt, low cut sweater almost revealing both her attributes, very high boots, and fishnet type stockings. Even Harry needed a better look at her.

"Um Ginny, you don't dress like that for me." Harry said to her so the others could hear.

"That's because I'm not trying to snag a husband." Ginny answered, making Hermione blush a deep crimson color.

"Have you ever considered a threesome?" Harry asked Ginny playfully, but loud enough for Hermione to hear.

"Not another one, you'll wear us all out." Ginny answered in a provocative voice.

"Hey mate listen, if you and this incredibly gorgeous creature don't hook up tonight, let me know, I have other plans." Harry said to Ron, but never took his eyes off Ginny.

Hermione just strolled off blushing a color that would have matched Cindy's hair perfectly. Ron just stared, open-mouthed and dumbfounded at the spot she vacated.

"Was that for me?" Ron asked.

"I hope so brother, if not, Harry and I have a playmate for tonight." Ginny said as she passed.

Ron waited for Ginny to be out of earshot. "Um Harry, did she just give me a green light?" Ron asked his best friend.

"As much as I would like to think it was for me, I have a feeling it was for you." Harry responded, following the girls out.

Dinner was a small family affair, only Harry, Ginny, Cindy, the twins, Arthur, Molly, Ron and Hermione were present. Ron and Hermione were sitting together, talking quietly between the two. They were too

wrapped up with each other to notice the constant stares they were getting from Arthur, Molly, Harry and Ginny.

“So son, how are things at the I.C.W?” Arthur asked.

Ron forced himself to look away from Hermione. “Hectic, ever since the DME went international, the work never ends. The Secretary General has just authorized us another two hundred Dark Aurors.” Ron explained.

“What’s the I.C.W? Cindy asked.

“It’s the International Confederation of Wizards dear, they are like the Ministry for the whole world.” Molly explained.

“So Uncle Ron fights bad guys all over the world?” Cindy asked curiously.

“Yes he does sweetheart, and he does it just for you.” Harry said, stroking Cindy’s hair.

“Wow, can I be a Dark Auror when I grow up?” Cindy asked in a childlike manner.

“We’ll see dear.” Ginny answered.

“How are things at the Ministry?” Ron asked his father.

“Good, ever since Riddle died, the job is very enjoyable. I only have to deal with insignificant squabbles and power hungry aides.” Arthur answered smiling.

“That’s no way to talk about Percy.” Ron joked, the adults laughed.

“Now that he’s Deputy Minister, all he wants is my job.” Arthur agreed.

“And how’s the shop, Ginny dear?” Molly asked her daughter.

“Business is great, everyone is starting to wear my designs, I’ve even got a request from the Queen of England to design a gown for her.” Ginny answered proudly.

“That’s wonderful dear, when can I go see you in action?” Molly asked.

“Yes when, I’d like to go too.” Arthur added.

“How about tomorrow, I was taking Cindy to be fitted for some new muggle clothes.” Ginny offered.

“That would be great, what time?” Molly asked.

“I usually leave at nine.” Ginny said.

“That’s perfect, I’ll pack a picnic basket, and we’ll have lunch in the park.” Molly said.

“It’s settled, ‘Designs by Ginny’ in the morning, and lunch in the park afterwards.” Arthur agreed.

“Where is your studio, anyway?” Hermione asked, realizing she had never known.

“In the United States, in the southern part of the state of Florida.” Ginny explained.

“Really, I hear it’s very beautiful there.” Hermione said.

“It’s a tropical climate, I chose it for the wonderful views from my office, I can see the beach.” Ginny declared.

“Maybe I can go after the year is over.” Hermione determined.

“You’re welcome any time.” Ginny agreed.

Ron whispered into Hermione’s ear, and they excused themselves from the table, and began walking the grounds.

Molly and Arthur took the twins, and retired to the indoor swimming pool, Harry and Ginny were all alone.

“All right, what’s with Hermione?” Harry asked, knowing Ginny knew the answer.

"She's in love." Ginny answered simply.

"Yeah, what else is new?" Harry asked sarcastically.

"She misses Ron." Ginny added.

"Are you going to make me drag the information out of you?" Harry asked, taking Ginny in his lap.

"What could you possibly do to make me talk?" Ginny asked provocatively.

"Let's see, I can take you to the point of no return and stop, over and over again, until you're ready to explode, and then ask you the same question, it's worked before." Harry said, running his hand up Ginny's thigh.

"You wouldn't dare?" She said.

"That's usually how I get you to do what I want." Harry said smiling.

"You would deprive me of my favorite activity just to find out some useless information." She said, kissing him deeply.

"Try me," Harry said.

"Ok, you win, she's jealous. Ron and his girlfriends are constantly in the news; there are pictures of them in the Daily Prophet every week, in Witch Weekly every other week, and in Witch People every month. The women he dates are all perfect tens, they're my models for heaven's sake, and she's kind of become insanely jealous. That's why she dressed like that, she wanted him to notice her, to want her, and I think she wants him to propose, again." Ginny said.

"This ought to be interesting." Harry said.

"What do you mean?" Ginny asked.

"I told Ron to take it slow with Hermione, now she wants to go fast, sparks are going to fly tonight." Harry said with a chuckle.

"So should we do anything?" Ginny asked.

“Yeah, we should make love, like always.” Harry said, kissing his wife.

“Why Mr. Potter, you certainly do know the way to a girl’s heart.” She said, kissing him back.

The next day found Ginny, Cindy, Arthur and Molly at the studio for ‘Designs by Ginny’. Besides being the number one designer for wizards and witches, Ginny was the fourth largest clothing designer for muggles. Her line of business suits for women made her the most sought after designer in New York, Paris, London and Milan.

She spent the morning showing her parents and daughter the facility. The building maintained both the manufacturing division of the company as well as the corporate offices. Cindy was happy to see she had her own office in the company.

“I have my own office?” Cindy asked excitedly.

“Absolutely, I can’t have my baby sitting in my waiting area, now can I?” Ginny asked her.

“Dad, I designed a line of clothes just for you, muggle business type, with wizard robe flare.” She said, showing him one of the suits. “What do you think?” She asked.

“It’s perfect, can I have it?” Arthur asked.

“Have it, I made it just for you.” Ginny said, handing it to him. “The other colors should be ready next week, I’ll send them over to Potter Castle when they’re done.” Ginny explained.

Ginny took Cindy to be fitted for her new clothes, Arthur and Molly stayed behind.

“She’s doing very well for herself Arthur.” Molly told her husband.

“All our children are doing well for themselves.” Arthur corrected her.

“And all thanks to Harry.” She added.

“A remarkable man, I know my life’s better because of him.” Arthur said honestly.

“Everyone’s life is better because of him.” Molly agreed.

Ginny took the family to Jonathan Dickenson State Park in Florida; she chose a quiet spot on the sand by the Atlantic Ocean. Molly summoned the basket she prepared, and they began to eat.

When the afternoon was winding down, and the hot Florida sun began to set, they were visited by two people they were just not expecting.

“Ron, Hermione, what are you two doing here?” Ginny asked nervously.

“We have important news,” Ron began. “She said YES.” He said holding up Hermione’s left hand.

“We’re getting married!”

To be continued...

In “The Family Potter and the Resurgence of Evil”